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MANE EVENT

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NHL-starved fans turn out for Canucks

ROAD WARRIORS

Vancouver Canucks players, from left, Kevin Bieksa, Jason Garrison and Ryan Kesler treats fans to an impromptu game of road hockey on a court at Coopers' Park, under the Cambie Bridge, on Wednesday. More than 150 fans watched Team Bieksa beat Team Kesler 3-2. Story, page 4. Earlier in the day, Bieksa and Daniel Sedin spoke to reporters at UBC on a new glimmer of hope in the ongoing NHL lockout, page 61. As well, Vancouver city council is looking at drafting a letter to the NHL Players' Association and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman calling on the two sides to bring an end to the lockout, page 3. PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

SkyTrain station shake-up

Metrotown. Upgrades could close region's second-busiest station

EMILY JACKSON
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Metrotown SkyTrain station passengers are in for a shake-up of their daily commute starting early 2014.

TransLink finally secured funding to upgrade the station and bus loop as part of a $153-million renovation to seven Expo Line stations. It requested proposals for design and construction-engineering services on Tuesday.

But it's not going to be a smooth transition for the region's second-busiest station.

Either Metrotown will close completely for 15 months — the cheaper option, according to a cost review — or passengers will deal with construction for 28 months.

If the station is shut down, a temporary station could be built immediately east of Metrotown, according to the request for proposals (RFP).

It would not be accessible by elevator, so passengers who can't use stairs would need to use Royal Oak or Patterson stations, according to the RFP.

Alternatives to "Metrotown East" are bus bridges to neighbouring stations, alterations to existing bus services or, of course, the longer, more costly renovation period.

SkyTrain spokeswoman Jennifer Siddon stressed the project is just in the design phase and each option will be weighed carefully to come up with the "best plan for everybody." Public hearings will take place before construction begins in 2014, she said.

"There would be some savings to shut down, do it all at once, but we have to balance that with what are the implications for our passengers," Siddon said.

Regardless, the renovations are badly needed as the station currently operates over capacity and has "significant access and accessibility challenges," according to the RFP.

Passengers at the bustling station at noon Wednesday all supported renovations but were divided over the potential shut down.

"As more people go shopping, I do think it would be a good investment to renovate the station," university student Abigail Pelaez said. "As a pedestrian, I would choose the temporary station so I'd encounter less construction."

"I should at least be able to get here," B.C. Institute of Technology student Jeremy Wildsmith said. "I don't think you can shut down the station that so many rely on."

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NHL lockout

City council misses hockey too

Could a plea from Mayor Gregor Robertson help end the NHL lockout?

Ottawa has asked Vancouver's mayor, along with leaders from other NHL cities, to send letters to the players' association and the NHL commissioner urging a quick end to the lockout — and Coun. Geoff Meggs thinks the plan is worth a shot.

"(Hockey) is more than a business in Canada, it's part of our national spirit so it's hard to calculate the loss," Meggs said Wednesday.

Vancouver city council will vote on Meggs' motion to lend support to NHL cities on Tuesday.

The Canucks bring in more than $100 million each year and the lockout has hurt food vendors, security, and cleaning staff at Rogers Arena, according to the motion.

And without revenue, the team can't contribute as much to charities and community organizations.

"It's hard on the hotels and bars down in Vancouver," said Meggs.

Robertson is concerned about the fallout from the NHL dispute and wants to support the NHL cities, Meggs said.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

The players aren't the only ones who want hockey to resume.
RICH LAM/GETTY IMAGES

Mayors' council chair Richard Walton heads a public meeting at TransLink's offices on Wednesday. KATE WEBB/METRO

Road pricing could take years: Minister

TransLink. Polak is asking Metro mayors to brainstorm more ways to fund transit

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Transportation Minister Mary Polak says if road pricing is the funding mechanism Metro Vancouver mayors want to keep pace with growing demand for transit, it certainly won't happen before the next election — more like in four to five years.

Polak met behind closed doors for an hour Wednesday with the TransLink mayors' council and TransLink officials — her first meeting with all the mayors since taking over the portfolio from Blair Lekstrom in September.

TransLink has maxed out what it can legally collect from parking taxes, fares and gas taxes, and the mayors have made it clear they don't want any more property-tax hikes without the province legislating new, longer-term funding sources.

"There is currently not a lot of direct and detailed analysis about the types of funding tools that they have proposed in the past," Polak said after the meeting.

"So that would be important if a minister is going to bring forward legislation."

Polak has asked the mayors to come to her with solutions that are affordable for families, regionally sourced, supported by the public, and don't negatively impact the economy.

Mayors' council chair Richard Walton said that is a tall order for the council, which has a part-time staff of one.

"We have to convince them through public consultation and feedback, and the onus for that, she's made it very clear, is on the mayors' council," he said.

"So that's a pretty significant task for the mayors' council to achieve that, given the fact it has no staff."

Nonetheless, Walton said the mayors will work hard come January and February to draft a "vision" and "high-level framework" detailing their priorities for the region and funding requirements.

A controversial property-tax hike averaging $23 per household for 2013 and 2014 is still being considered, but may not be necessary. TransLink commissioner Martin Crilly delivered a report at Wednesday's meeting concluding immediate funding shortfalls may have been overestimated, though TransLink officials disputed some of his findings.

Quoted

"We have to convince them through public consultation and feedback, and the onus for that, she's made it very clear, is on the mayors' council."

Mayors' council chair Richard Walton

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Cadet-corps sexual-assault case. B.C. instructor jailed, banished from military

A military court has sentenced a former deputy commander of the Victoria-based military cadet corps to one year in prison and banished him from the military for sexually abusing teenage cadets.

Twenty-six-year-old Capt. Daniel Moriarity was also demoted to a 2nd lieutenant by military judge Lt.-Col. Louis-Vincent D'auteuil, who says Moriarity took advantage of vulnerable young people he was entrusted to lead.

Moriarity was found guilty of sexual exploitation, sexual assault and sexual interference by a military court last October in connection to attacks on a 15-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl in separate incidents at the Vernon army camp. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Expulsion

12 months

In a joint submission, the military prosecutor and Moriarity's defence lawyer called for the 12-month sentence, rank demotion and military expulsion.

Kitsilano. Harper yet to respond to coast-guard-closure complaints

Vancouver's police and fire chiefs are putting pressure on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to reconsider closing the Kitsilano coast-guard base.

"There is no question" lives will be at risk if the base closes as scheduled in May 2013, Fire Chief John McKearney wrote in a letter to the prime minister dated Nov. 30.

Rescue response times will be longer and police will have less capacity to focus on crime prevention, Police Chief Jim Chu wrote in a separate letter the same day.

Both chiefs asked Harper to reconsider the closure and expressed the desire to discuss the matter further.

But they haven't heard from Harper yet, McKearney said on Wednesday.

"I'm not hopeful we're going to get a response any time soon," he said. "The next step from here is to politely ask for a response from the prime minister and give it some time."

The Prime Minister's Office did not respond to Metro's questions whether Harper would reconsider the closure or meet with the chiefs.

But the government did say it's "confident" there will be no negative impact to Vancouver's search-and-rescue services once the changes are complete. The coast guard will replace a hovercraft at Sea Station Island with a larger vessel and add a seasonal inshore rescue boat, according to a statement from Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Kitsilano coast-guard base
MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

The government said Vancouver's fire and police services participated in working groups to transition to the new system.

The Kitsilano base handles about 300 calls per year, about one third of which are "life distress calls." Its rescue activities will now fall to the municipal fire and police services.
EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Diamonds and rubies

RCMP search for jewel thieves

RCMP are asking for the public's help in finding thousands of dollars worth of diamond- and ruby-encrusted jewelry stolen from a home in Langley.

Cpl. Holly Marks says thieves kicked in the front door and took gold and silver chains, a men's 14-carat gold puzzle ring with 15 diamonds and 12 rubies, a 1.5-carat diamond ring and a three-quarter-carat maple-leaf diamond ring.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Several people injured

ICBC warns of spike in pedestrian accidents

The Insurance Corporation of B.C. is urging pedestrians and drivers to be careful on provincial streets after a spike in accidents involving pedestrians.

Several people have been injured this month, while hit-and-run crashes in the Lower Mainland have killed two people and put two others in hospital.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

A member from Team Kesler tries to score against Team Bieksa's goalie Wednesday at an impromptu street hockey game on a court at Coopers' Park, just under the Cambie Bridge. Canucks players Kevin Bieksa and Ryan Kesler sent tweets earlier in the day, inviting fans to join them for the game. PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

Fans treated to Kesler-Bieksa winter classic

Taking it to the streets. Canucks play road hockey on a basketball court at Coopers' Park

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There may not be an NHL season yet, but that didn't stop Kevin Bieksa and Ryan Kesler from treating Canucks fans to an impromptu street hockey pickup game.

The pair sent out tweets Wednesday just after noon inviting Vancouverites to join them for a game of road hockey on a basketball court at Coopers' Park, just under the north end of the Cambie Bridge.

"Every time we're talking hockey lately, it's been serious and CBA, so we're just going back to our roots with a fun road-hockey game in the pouring rain," Bieksa told reporters before the game.

More than 150 fans got to watch Team Bieksa win 3-2 in shootout against Team Kesler.

Kesler and new teammate Jason Garrison, who are both injured, stepped in as referees, wearing uniforms with blacked-out NHL logos.

Before the puck dropped, Mark Donnelly led everyone in singing O Canada and the Green Men (who were both on Bieksa's squad) provided the laughs.

Sully distracted the other team's goalie by taking off his jersey and shaking his body, while Force handled the puck and easily scored to give their team the edge in the shootout.

Bieksa and his team members huddled and shouted "Kesler sucks!" in celebration.

Michael Matthews, 19, played goalie for Bieksa's winning team and said it was the highlight of his year.

Holden Gibson, 7, and his sister Georgia, 6, were ecstatic to get a chance to see and play with their favourite players.

"I'm happy that I just got to play my first hockey game with the Canucks and with a real Canucks stick," Holden said.

Teachers who claimed mercury poisoning to get a new compensation hearing

Six Cranbrook high school teachers who say they were poisoned by mercury while at work have received a new court-ordered compensation board hearing.

The Workers Compensation Appeal Tribunal rejected the teachers' claim that they were poisoned after being exposed to mercury in the science classes at Mount Baker Secondary in 2004 and 2005.

The group took the board and the school district to court for a review of the decision.

B.C. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Saunders called the tribunal's decision unfair and unreasonable, ruling the panel disregarded evidence that the teachers were poisoned.

The judge said the panel's readiness to dismiss the expert evidence was difficult to understand.

He has set aside the tribunal's ruling and ordered another hearing by panel members who now must consider all the evidence in the case.

Mercury assessments were conducted at the school in 2005 and remediation was undertaken shortly afterwards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Live and let fry: McCartney's fireworks scald BC Place

Left his mark. Pyrotechnics during Paul McCartney concert left burn marks on roof of venue

CARA MCKENNA
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Paul McCartney put on a scorching show at BC Place last week — literally.

Pyrotechnics during McCartney's Nov. 26 concert left burn marks on acoustic fabric panels on the roof of the venue.

Officials are still unsure how much damage was done.

"The pyro did reach up to those panels and leave some scorch marks," said Kathy Delisser, assistant general manager of BC Place.

"We're still assessing what the extent of the damage is."

Delisser said that there is uncertainty about whether the marks can be washed away or if the panels will have to be replaced.

She didn't know what it might cost to replace the panels, but she said any expense would come from Paul's people, not from the venue.

"It would be covered off by the Paul McCartney tour insurance."

It was McCartney's concert finale, Live and Let Die, that featured the fireworks responsible for burning the roof.

The fireworks can be seen bouncing off the ceiling in concert videos.

The partly retractable roof was installed as part of a recent half-million-dollar renovation to the 30-year-old stadium.

Quote

"It would be covered off by the Paul McCartney tour insurance."

Kathy Delisser
assistant general manager of BC Place

Paul McCartney plays BC Place on Nov. 25. During the show, the pyrotechnics caused damage to the venue. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

CBC to hold annual food bank and open house

TV host George Stroumboulopoulos will be at the CBC broadcast centre in Vancouver Friday for the 26th annual CBC British Columbia Food Bank Day and Open House. Donations are accepted from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. COURTESY OF CBC

It's important for people in the limelight to genuinely be involved in supporting causes they care about, says George Stroumboulopoulos.

That is why the popular TV host is asking Vancouverites to take a bite out of hunger as he joins other on-air personalities and reporters at the CBC broadcast centre in downtown Vancouver Friday for the 26th annual CBC British Columbia Food Bank Day and Open House. Donations are accepted from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Stroumboulopoulos told Metro Wednesday that he feels it's his "responsibility as a human being" to help out, even more so since he's been blessed in his career.

"If you get a lot of attention thrown upon you for whatever reason, then that attention can be like a hot light, and many high-profile people like to just bask in the light," he said. "If you bask in that light too long, it gets too hot and you get burned. When that light or attention is given to you, you're supposed to deflect it to the places that really need it."

"To make a living being yourself, it's not something to be taken lightly," he added. "Otherwise it just becomes about you and that's the absolute wrong way to approach this life, in my opinion."

Stroumboulopoulos said that what he loves about British Columbians is that "people really come together" to help others going through tough times.

"To eat, to have access to food is a right and not a privilege," he said, urging people to donate.

"It may seem like an inconvenience to some, but a little bit of help makes a big difference. Food banks aren't food banks, they're people. This is for people," he added.

He also advised parents to bring their children down to Friday's event to teach them the importance of being there for others.

"They need to know what's going on in the world and they need to see how their actions can have a positive reaction," he said.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS/METRO

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‘Directioners’ get ready to shop at pop-up 1D World

One Direction. Pacific Northwest gets its first retail outlet for fans of popular U.K. boy band

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
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Calling all Directioners, U.K.’s chart-topping boy band has a real treat for you before Christmas.

A pop-up store set to meet every One Direction fan’s shopping desires will open in Vancouver Saturday.

Loyal fans will get a chance to shop at 1D World, a temporary retail store that sells all things One Direction — from exclusive 1D onesies and posters to calendars and T-shirts.

The first 1D World retail store in the Pacific Northwest opens at 9 a.m. Saturday at 929 Granville St. for a limited time only.

The popular U.K. boy band consisting of members Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Louis Thomlinson has reached No 1. in 32 countries with their second studio album Take Me Home.

“We know there’s a big population of One Direction fans based in Vancouver and it just seems right to come here,” said Barry Drinkwater, managing director of Global Merchandising Services, the event merchandising organization responsible for 1D World launches all over the globe.

“We have a green screen so the fans can come and get their pictures taken next to their favourite boy or all the boys in the backdrop,” he said.

Given the fan reaction from the recent New York, Toronto and Australia launches, event organizers are already expecting lineups of loyal Directioners well in advance of Saturday morning’s opening.

Fans can also give back to the community by bringing a non-perishable food item for donation to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. Directioners who donate a food item on Saturday will be entered to win 1D merchandise.

One Direction fans line up outside the 1D World store in Toronto in August. COURTESY OF 1D WORLD

Wily Stanley Park coyote worries dog owners

A coyote has been appearing almost daily in Stanley Park’s Malkin Bowl to hunt squirrels. COU RTESY OF STANLEY PARK ECOLOGY SOCIETY

A coyote making regular daytime appearances in Stanley Park’s Malkin Bowl has some dog owners concerned.

The coyote has been seen almost daily and has been hunting squirrels, the Stanley Park Ecological Society said in a release Tuesday night.

Officials said coyotes are normally timid creatures, which has them concerned that the animal may become tamer and start to attack pets.

“Since Sunday I’ve seen it every day,” said Dan Straker, who co-ordinates the Co-existing With Coyotes program for the Stanley Park Ecology Society.

Straker fears someone will try to feed the animal and erode its fear of people entirely.

“In 2009 we had a similar situation. That coyote ended up taking a small dog off a leash, and that coyote had to be destroyed.”

John Bacon, who co-owns Little Buddies Pet Care and lives a block away from Stanley Park, said he worries about coyotes even though he mostly walks dogs on the streets.

“It absolutely is a concern,” said Bacon. “I have a little Boston terrier and live a block away from the park. Definitely she’s on a leash.”

Bacon said he feels that in past instances with coyotes in Vancouver, the city is all talk and no action. “The city doesn’t seem to do much about keeping people safe.”

CARA MCKENNA/METRO

Stay safe

If you spot a coyote:

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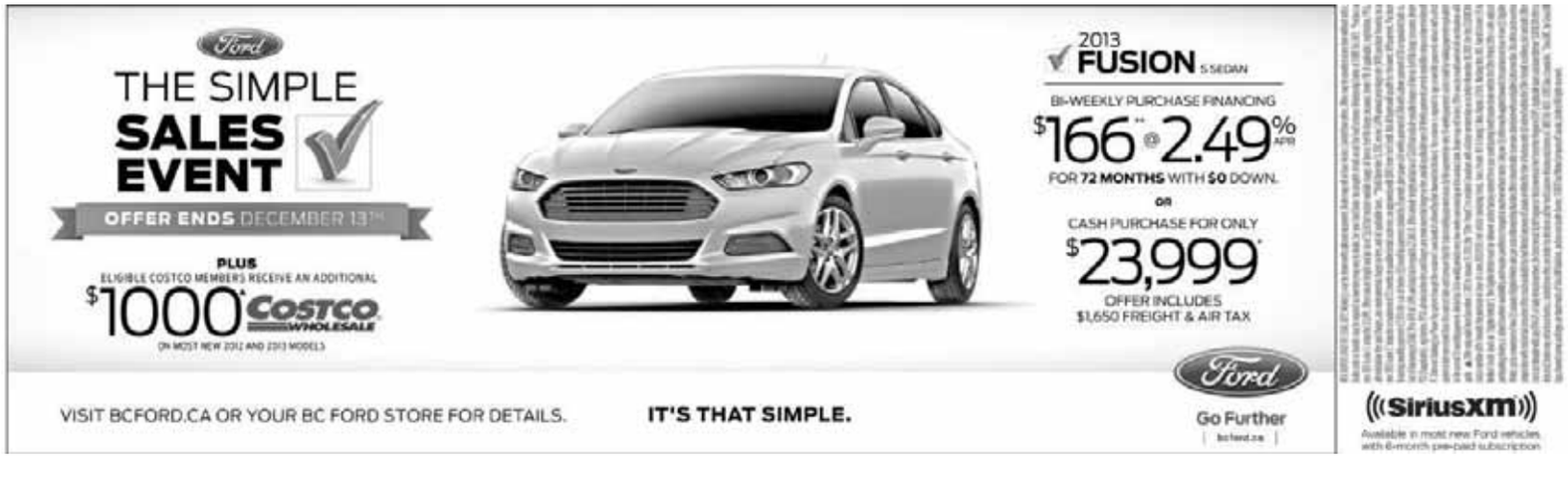

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Killarney students bring hope to those less fortunate

Downtown Eastside. School program gets kids involved in community projects

CARA MCKENNA
vancouver@metronews.ca

Killarney Secondary School students helped Vancouverites in need by handing out care packages on the Downtown Eastside Wednesday afternoon.

Along with bags full of toiletries and groceries, people lined up to get sandwiches, pastries and clothes.

"I got most of this for my girlfriend because she was in the hospital for four months and lost everything," said Lynnette Keshane, who received a bag of clothes as well as a care package full of necessities like socks, a toothbrush, soap and shampoo.

Keshane was one of many to line up to receive one of the care packages.

"We do a lot of fun stuff at the school to raise funds for events like this," said Joanne Windsor, a teacher who runs the Killarney community service club.

"It started as a small group that was interested in doing community projects. Now it's a much larger group."

Windsor said there are about 60 club members that organize community projects throughout the year, this one being their largest.

Jaiun Lee, a student in Grade 12 who handed out sandwiches, said it was an eye-opening experience for her.

"It's my first time coming out here," said Lee. "I didn't really know what situations they were in before."

Windsor, who started the program about 10 years ago, stressed the importance of helping the less fortunate.

"It's very rewarding. These people need something. They need their spirits lifted too."

Killarney Secondary School students hand out food, toiletries and clothes to people in need on Hastings Street Wednesday. CARA MCKENNA/METRO

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

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Le Crayon Khôl mini in Black, 0.7 g
Bi-Facil, 30 ml
Estimated value of $52

$61

Trésor Moments
Trésor Eau de Parfum, 50 ml (full size)
Trésor Lotion pour le Corps, 50 ml
Trésor Gel Douche, 50 ml
Estimated value of $122

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How could they not help him?

Subway horror in N.Y.C. Did 'bystander effect' stop crowd from rushing to help man who was pushed to his death?

MICHELLE CASTILLO
Metro World News in London

The ugly question is: Why?

Why did no one on a crowded subway platform in New York City help Ki-Suck Han when he was shoved onto the tracks to his death?

Blame it on the "bystander effect," a psychologist told Metro World News.

Or to put it another way, a "diffusion of responsibility" occurs, said Dr. Scott Bea of the Cleveland Clinic Main Campus in Cleveland, Ohio.

Another psychologist, Dr. Elizabeth Waterman, said the more people who see an event like this happen, the less likely they are to help a stranger.

"The pressure for people to take responsibility is diffused among the group of others, therefore the individuals feel less pressure to help," said Waterman of Morningside Recovery Centers in Newport Beach, Calif.

Ki-Suck Han died on the tracks at the Times Square subway station.

A gruesome newspaper photo shows a solitary, tiny figure helplessly clawing at the platform as a Q train looms in the distance.

Ki-Suck Han's widow, Serim Han, holds a picture of him at a New York news conference on Wednesday. She's reported as saying they had an argument before the tragedy. She tried to phone him later, but he never picked up.
BEBETO MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The suspect

A homeless man, 30-year-old Naeem Davis, was arrested on Wednesday in the New York City subway pushing death of Ki-Suck Han.

- **The video.** Security video showed a man fitting the suspect's description working with street vendors near Rockefeller Center, police said.
- **The charge.** Davis is in custody, facing a second-degree murder charge.

The New York Post ran the image on its cover, outraging many citizens.

Photographer R. Umar Abbasi defended himself on Wednesday, saying he used his flash hoping the subway driver would see it and stop.

"The perp was running toward me. I was afraid he might push me onto the tracks," he wrote in the Post.

Bea said: "I would hypothesize that the photographer is trying to … rationalize his own behaviour …

"The public will have a strong tendency to judge those who were present negatively without understanding the powerful nature of 'the bystander effect.'"

No answers. In just 22 seconds, a man died

Psychologist Dr. Elizabeth Waterman tried to explain what could have gone on inside the minds of the subway bystanders — and the photographer who took the grim picture.

Q: The photographer claims there were 22 seconds between when the man fell and when he was crushed. Would there be any reason why people wouldn't step forward to help him within the "short" period of time?
A: They were possibly in shock and trying to process the events taking place. Also, the "bystander effect" likely played a role.

Q: The photographer is being faulted for not helping out and it looks like he is taking the brunt of the blame. What could he specifically be going through psychologically?
A: It seems as if he was trying to help the individual based on his explanation. However, I cannot say for sure.

He may have acted on instinct and done what came automatically to him in the name of helping the individual.

MICHELLE CASTILLO/MWN

Rare apology. Angry border agent threatened to cut her resident card

In a rare move, the Canada Border Services Agency has apologized to a Toronto woman for an incident at the Peace Bridge.

Liu Yazhen, 60, complained that a border guard threw her permanent resident card on the floor and threatened to cut it with scissors.

"I would like to offer you my sincere apology that the actions of one of our employees were so distressing to you," wrote Jeff Walters, acting director of port-of-entry operations at Fort Erie, in a letter dated Nov. 23.

"I assure you that the behaviour you have described is not condoned under the CBSA code of conduct."

The border agency said "appropriate administrative action" would be taken to ensure the officer is aware of the need to remain professional at all times when interacting with the public.

But it has refused to reveal the identity of the officer or the disciplinary action being taken.

Liu Yazhen had arrived at the Peace Bridge after visiting her son and friends in New York City, said her daughter Karen Chen.

"Being from China, my mother was scared and didn't want to get into trouble," Chen said. The officer "owes my mother an apology," she added.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bulldozing error

Hey, where's our lovely chateau?

Residents of a French village in Bordeaux are dumbfounded after discovering their 18th-century chateau was bulldozed "by mistake."

Officials in Yvrac said workers hired to renovate the grand manor and raze a small building on the same estate mixed them up. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Puerto Rico's test

Can Twitter keep you out of jail?

Puerto Rico has turned to Twitter in an experimental effort to help reduce the number of violent crimes.

Officials are allowing prison inmates to use a Twitter account and share their experiences of being in jail. The pilot program is dubbed Follow Me so you Don't Follow Me.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pippa and James Middleton leave the London hospital after visiting their sister, Kate.
DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Gotcha! DJs' trick gets info on pregnant Kate

The hospital fell for it — royally.

Two Australian radio disc jockeys apologized on Wednesday after impersonating Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles in a prank call that got a London hospital to tell them all about Kate Middleton's condition.

The 30-year-old Duchess of Cambridge is pregnant and is being treated at the King Edward VII Hospital in London for severe morning sickness.

A woman using the often-mimicked voice of Britain's monarch asked after the duchess's health — and was told by a nurse that Kate "hasn't had any retching with me and she's been sleeping on and off."

"She's sleeping at the moment and she has had an uneventful night.

"She's been given some fluids. She's stable at the moment," the kindly nurse informed the supposed queen and prince on the station's recording.

A dog yaps in the background while the alleged queen and prince talk about travelling to the hospital to check in on the patient.

"I would suggest that any time after nine o'clock will be suitable to visit," the nurse said. "We'll be getting her freshened up."

Australian radio personalities Mel Greig and Michael Christian of 2DayFM later apologized for the hoax — along with their station.

"We were very surprised that our call was put through. We thought we'd be hung up on as soon as they heard our terrible accents," they said in a joint statement with the station.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Good news at last for Ford

Is that a triumphant look on the face of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford? He has just learned he can stay in office at least until mid-January in a conflict case. Ontario Superior Court Justice Gladys Pardu on Wednesday granted him a stay of an earlier decision that would have forced him out of power early next week. This allows him to keep his job until a ruling is issued on his appeal. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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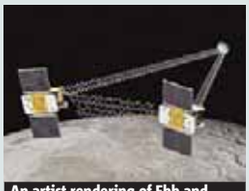
Gravity mapping

Moon's crust more battered, thinner than once thought

The moon took quite a beating in its early days; more than previously believed, scientists reported Wednesday.

This surprising new view of the moon comes from detailed gravity mapping by twin spacecraft, which slipped into orbit around the celestial body earlier this year.

Evidence of a highly-fractured lunar interior just below the surface suggests that other rocky planets, including Earth, would have suffered similar bombardment from space rocks early in their history.



An artist rendering of Ebb and Flow. NASA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Measurements by the NASA spacecraft called Ebb and Flow also found that the moon's crust is much thinner than believed — only about 40 kilometres thick.

Though past missions have measured lunar gravity — about one-sixth of Earth's pull — Ebb and Flow are the first spacecraft dedicated to this pursuit.

To collect data, the washing machine-size spacecraft flew in formation, orbiting about 56 kilometres above the moon's surface. Their positions allowed them to peer deep into the moon.

The spacecraft also managed to see landforms on the moon in greater detail than before, including volcanoes, basins and craters.

The mission is scheduled to end later this month when Ebb and Flow crash into the moon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Astronaut faces year on space station

An American first. Mission intended as a test for trip to Mars

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly is already bracing for an unprecedented one-year mission aboard the International Space Station. He figures it will be as gruelling as climbing Mount Everest.

"It's fun when you're done with it, not while you're doing it," Kelly said Wednesday, barely a week after being named to the marathon flight along with Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko.

The mission, which is set to begin in 2015, is intended as a medical test bed for even longer Mars expeditions in the decades ahead.

Space station life can be routine, Kelly noted during a news conference.

"In the morning, you wake up, you're at work. When you go to sleep, you're also at work. So imagine being in your office for a whole year and you never get to leave," he said.

Meanwhile, in Russia, Kornienko's wife wept at the news. The 52-year-old cosmonaut, a rocket engineer with one daughter, said he initially had some doubts about taking on such a challenge. He previously spent six months in space.

"A year is a serious time," Kornienko said in Russian. But he said his doubts did not last long, "and actually it was my initiative."

Kelly was among four astronauts on NASA's short list for the assignment. Each had served as a commander aboard the space station, and was able to perform spacewalks and robot arm operations. Medical information also went into the selection: A crew member could not have exceeded his limit for exposure to cosmic radiation, for instance.

Kelly said he has no idea how or why he ended up being chosen.

Dr. Igor Ushakov, director of the Institute for Biological Problems in Moscow, warned that the medical risks of zero gravity will be at least double what they are on the more typical six-month mission.

NASA space station program scientist Julie Robinson expects the two men to come back just fine. They will watch an assortment of multinational crews come and go during their tenure; up to six people live on the orbiting outpost at any one time.

The loss of bone mass is not nearly the problem it used to be in weightlessness because of improved exercise equipment and procedures, she said. The newest concern is impaired vision related to pressure on the brain and spinal cord; in some cases, astronauts suffer vision problems long after their flight.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Endurance record

Kelly will set a U.S. space endurance record with this mission. No American has spent more than seven months in space at a time.

- **Russia,** however, can boast four cosmonauts with at least one uninterrupted year in space.
- **The world record** is held by Dr. Valery Polyakov at 14 months.

A star-spangled landscape

In this NASA image, the United States and part of Canada is seen at night via composite data acquired by the new Suomi NPP satellite in April and October. The image was made possible by technology that can observe dim signals such as city lights, gas flares, auroras and wildfires. NASA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASA seems lost in space: National Academy of Sciences

NASA doesn't have a clear sense of where it is going, an independent panel of science and engineering experts said in a stinging report Wednesday.

The report by a panel of the distinguished National Academy of Sciences doesn't blame the space agency; it faults the president, Congress and the nation for not giving NASA better direction. At the same time, it said NASA is doing little to further the White House's goal of sending astronauts to an asteroid.

The space shuttles are now museum pieces. Few people are paying attention to the exploits of the International Space Station, and American astronauts have to rely on Russian spaceships to get there and back. Meanwhile, rocket-building is being outsourced to private companies, and a commercial venture plans to send people to the moon by the end of the decade.

Academy panel member Bob Crippen, a retired NASA manager and astronaut who piloted the first space shuttle mission, said he has never seen the space agency so adrift. He said that includes the decade between the end of the Apollo moon landings in the early 1970s and the beginning of the shuttle program.

Never so aimless

"I think people (at NASA) want to be focused a little more and know where they are going."

Academy panel member Bob Crippen, a retired NASA manager and astronaut who piloted the first space shuttle mission.

NASA spokesman David Weaver defended the agency, saying in an emailed statement that it has clear and challenging goals. He listed several projects, including continued use of the International Space Station and efforts to develop a heavy-duty rocket and crew capsule capable of taking astronauts into deep space.

John Logsdon, a space policy expert who advised the Obama campaign in 2008, said the panel's report, which is more strongly worded than usual for the academy, "rather fairly points its fingers at the White House."

"There's a general sense of disappointment that the administration has not been more bold and visionary in setting out a path for the program," said Logsdon, who was not on the panel.

U.S. President Barack Obama told the space agency in 2010 to plan to send astronauts to an asteroid by 2025 as a training ground for an eventual Mars landing. But the 80-page panel report and its authors said there is little support for that idea within NASA and the international space community.

Also, NASA hasn't allocated much money for it. And it hasn't done much to determine an asteroid target. In fact, the agency's vague strategic plan avoids mention of an asteroid mission.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spacefaring spouses

Saturn's rings not only ones in space

So what exactly does an astronaut bring with him on a six-month visit to the International Space Station?

If you're Chris Hadfield, a newly-minted wedding band is at the top of the list.

When he blasts off on Dec. 19, the Canadian astronaut will have the ring as a constant reminder of his wife Helene.

The couple will celebrate their 31st wedding anniversary four days after Hadfield soars into space aboard a Russian spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The 53-year-old Hadfield said in an interview from Russia today that he and Helene decided he should take something small and light, given that space is limited.

The veteran astronaut is also taking up a watch belonging to his daughter Kristin. On each of his two previous space trips, Hadfield brought up a watch belonging to each of his two sons. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Drawing a line. Israel settlement plan not helpful to peace: Baird

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird says Israel's plan to build new settlements on territory claimed by the Palestinians is not helping the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Baird made his first public statement in the House of Commons on Wednesday on the controversial move by the Israelis, which was meant as retaliation after the Palestinians won greater recognition at the United Nations last week.

The Israeli settlement announcement sparked international condemnation from all of Canada's allies, including the United States, which voted against the Palestinian motion at the UN.

The Harper government has been criticized for staying virtually silent on the Israeli move, beyond a generic statement that unilateral moves by either side were not good for the prospects of peace.

Baird reiterated the government's heavy criticism of the Palestinian statehood bid during question period when he was asked about the settlements by the Bloc Quebecois.

But he emphasized that neither the UN vote nor the settlement announcement is helpful.

"We have been a strong supporter of economic development and security relations in the West Bank through our humanitarian and foreign aid developments, with respect to the Palestinian Authority," said Baird.

"However, the PA's action and provocative rhetoric at the United Nations would obviously elicit a response from Israel. Neither is helpful to advance the cause of peace and we do not support either."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Halting peace

"Even Israel's allies are denouncing this renewed colonization."

Bloc Quebecois MP Jean-Francois Fortin, who called for "a more balanced" position.

Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird speaks during a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Nov. 29. KATHY WILLENS/ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Residents cross a river using suspended ropes at Andap, New Bataan township, Compostela Valley in southern Philippines, Wednesday, a day after Typhoon Bopha made landfall. Typhoon Bopha, one of the strongest typhoons to hit the Philippines this year, barrelled across the country's south on Tuesday, killing scores of people while triggering landslides, flooding and cutting off power in two entire provinces. BULLIT MARQUEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Powerful typhoon ravages Philippines

Hundreds dead, missing. Red Cross issues urgent appeal for $4.8 million to help people directly affected

A powerful typhoon that washed away emergency shelters, a military camp and possibly entire families in the southern Philippines has killed almost 350 people with nearly 400 missing, authorities said.

More bodies were retrieved from hardest-hit Compostela Valley and Davao Oriental provinces and six others impacted by Tuesday's storm, the Office of Civil Defence reported.

At least 200 of the victims died in Compostela Valley alone, including 78 villagers and soldiers who perished in a flash flood that swamped two emergency shelters and a military camp.

The farming town of 45,000 people was a muddy wasteland of collapsed houses and coconut and banana trees felled by ferocious winds.

Bodies of victims were laid on the ground for viewing by people searching for missing relatives. Some were badly mangled after being dragged by raging floodwaters over rocks and other debris. A man sprayed insecticide on the remains to keep away swarms of flies.

A father wept when he found the body of his child after lifting a plastic cover. A mother, meanwhile, went away in tears, unable to find her missing children. "I have three children," she said repeatedly, flashing three fingers before a TV cameraman.

Two men carried the mud-caked body of an unidentified girl that was covered with coconut leaves on a makeshift stretcher made from a blanket and wooden poles.

Dionisia Requinto, 43, felt lucky to have survived with her husband and their eight children after swirling flood waters surrounded their home. She said they escaped and made their way up a hill to safety, bracing themselves against boulders and fallen trees as they climbed.

"The water rose so fast," she told The Associated Press. "It was horrible. I thought it was going to be our end."

The deaths came despite efforts by President Benigno Aquino III's government to force residents out of high-risk communities as the typhoon approached.

Some 20 typhoons and storms lash the northern and central Philippines each year, but they rarely hit the vast southern Mindanao region where sprawling export banana plantations have been planted over the decades because it seldom experiences strong winds that could blow down the trees.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washed away

"These were whole families among the registered missing ... Entire families may have been washed away."

New Bataan Interior Secretary Mar Roxas

Soldiers of the 71st Infantry Battalion, 1001st Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army, assist a family as they arrive at an evacuation centre in Compostela Valley, southern Philippines. PHILIPPINE ARMY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Caught in the crossfire

Syrian civil war causing Lebanese casualties

The families of Lebanese men killed in Syria last week say their relatives were more interested in nice clothes and vacations than fighting a civil war. Yet Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime branded them foreign jihadists — and their deaths set off three days of new spillover violence.

Gunmen loyal to opposite sides battled Wednesday in Tripoli. The fighting has killed six people and wounded nearly 60 since Monday, security officials said. The bloodshed is a sign of just how vulnerable Lebanon is to getting sucked into the Syrian crisis. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Several dead, injured

Earthquake shakes rural Iran

A moderate earthquake shook eastern Iran Wednesday, killing at least five people and injuring several others, Iranian TV reported.

State TV said the 5.5-magnitude quake hit South Khorasan province in eastern Iran near the border with Afghanistan at 12:08 p.m. (EST) Wednesday.

The broadcast quoted Javad Heravi, who represents the region in the Iranian parliament, as saying that the quake caused damage to rural buildings and cut power lines and telephone communication.

The broadcast said rescue teams were dispatched to the area. It said 12 villages were affected by the quake. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Car scam? U.S. regulators warn Canadians of non-existent dealership

American regulators have issued a warning about a car scam originating out of Oklahoma that appears to be targeting Canadians looking for great deals.

The warning is about Ambient Auto Centre, which has been advertising high-end, late model vehicles on several Canadian websites at prices well below normal.

The catch, according to Canadian and American regulators, is that Ambient doesn't appear to exist much beyond having an elaborate website.

"It's just a complete scam," John Cobb, an investigator with the Oklahoma Used Motor Vehicle and Parts Commission, said Wednesday.

"They're trying to get a victim on the hook to wire them the money for a vehicle."

The company promises to ship the vehicle, but Cobb said that won't happen and the buyer would simply be out of any money sent.

The Canadian sites on which Ambient advertises include Autotrader, Wheels, eBay, Craigslist, Kijiji and Autocatch.

In an interview from Oklahoma City, Cobb said the scam appears to be aimed solely north of the U.S. border, and inquiries about Ambient have come in from across Canada. "You've got to do research, research, research,'' said Terry O'Keefe with the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council.

He warned consumers to take extra precautions when buying a vehicle online.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Ambient Auto Centre'

Inquiries about Ambient began arriving at Oklahoma Used Motor Vehicle and Parts Commission in mid-October. When they couldn't find a dealer by that name, officials went to visit the dealership at the listed address. It turned out to be an empty field.

- Ambient's website boasts the "largest selection of used luxury cars" but photographs of vehicles appear ripped off from other car dealers, and testimonials appear fabricated. An industry spokesman said it's imperative to confirm a seller's identity.

Legal language update

Word lunatic removed from U.S. laws

The word lunatic will be stricken from U.S. federal law under legislation that passed Wednesday and is headed to President Barack Obama for signature.

The congressional action is the latest effort to remove language from the U.S. code that has become outdated or demeaning. Two years ago Congress took out references in federal law to the term mental retardation.

The House of Representatives voted 398-1 to make the change.

The lone no vote was cast by Texas Republican Louie Gohmert who said the most pressing issue is saving the U.S. from bankruptcy.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the run

John McAfee arrested

Software company founder John McAfee has been arrested in Guatemala City apparently for entering the country illegally. The interior minister said he was detained at a hotel. McAfee said he had formally requested asylum in Guatemala.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hit stage musical Spamalot sued by movie producer

Pedestrians walk under the marquee of the Broadway show Monty Python's Spamalot at the Shubert Theatre in New York in this 2008 photo. A producer of the film Monty Python and the Holy Grail is suing the comedy troupe over royalties from the hit stage musical Spamalot. Producer Mark Forstater wants a bigger share of proceeds from the show, which is based on the 1975 movie spoof of the legend of King Arthur.

CRAIG RUTTLE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Girl-only abortions may reopen debate

Old wounds. Tory MP fears new technology may lead to abortion of female fetuses

Conservative MP Stella Ambler hugs Mark Warawa after he spoke on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Wednesday. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

If Canadians thought the last House of Commons debate around abortion was contentious, the next one is shaping up to be even more complicated and potentially a closer vote.

B.C. Conservative MP Mark Warawa is promoting a private member's motion that calls on the Commons to condemn the practice of sex selection. Sex selection occurs when a woman aborts a fetus — usually a female one — after determining the gender through an ultrasound.

Warawa said Wednesday his motion is about discrimination against women, rather than reproductive rights. It is not likely to come up for debate until March.

The father of two girls said he was compelled to act after watching a CBC investigative story last June. He doesn't have numbers on the prevalence in Canada.

"I think parliamentarians are faced with two choices: We either condemn this form of discrimination against women and girls or we endorse it," Warawa said, accompanied by 11 Tory colleagues.

Although Warawa and his supporters would not concede a connection between the motion and the wider debate over restricting abortions, the Prime Minister's Office is doing just that.

"The government is opposed to opening this debate. Parliament has already voted on this issue," spokesman Carl Vallee said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manhunt

45 illegals still evade authorities

The hunt is on for 45 Romanian nationals smuggled into Canada.

Government officials said Wednesday the missing are among 85 people who entered the country illegally since February.

Authorities have rounded up 40 of them so far and 30 of these were detained under new immigration law provisions that saw the group designated as part of an "irregular arrival," or human-smuggling operation.

"We open our arms to true immigrants and true refugees who follow the rules," Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said at a news conference in Stanstead, Que., a border town believed to have been the group's entry point. "We will not tolerate those who are abusing our generosity."

The first of five waves of Romanian nationals began arriving in February, officials said Wednesday.

The smuggling ring saw people travel to Mexico, cross illegally into the U.S., drive north to the border and sneak into Quebec.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Austria

Anonymity helps stop infanticide

An Austrian university says that the number of newborns deliberately killed within 24 hours of their birth has been cut by more than half in the country because of a 2001 law allowing mothers to remain anonymous during and after delivery.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cross-border crime

48 nations tackle online child abuse

Forty-eight countries united on Wednesday in an alliance to fight sexual child abuse online, a crime that experts say is increasing at alarming rates.

The alliance will focus on identifying victims, prosecuting offenders, raising awareness and reducing the availability of child porn online, according to a joint declaration.

The countries will also work on exchanging information, expertise and training, said U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

"Those who would harm our children are not respecters of our national borders — we ... must not allow these borders to be impediments," he said.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Living for the lost

Five-month-old Lexie May Wade wears the medals of her father, Pte. Daniel Wade, who was killed in Afghanistan, as she watches the homecoming parade of 3 Yorks on Wednesday in York, England.
CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES

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Rich, developing nations spar over climate change

Pollution. While the UN says rich countries are mostly to blame, the U.S. and the EU point out China is now the world's top carbon polluter

Rich countries are to blame for climate change and should take the lead in forging a global climate pact by 2015, a deadline that "must be met," the head of the United Nations said on Wednesday.

On the sidelines of international climate talks in Qatar, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said it was "only fair and reasonable that the developed world should bear most of the responsibility" in fighting the gradual warming of the planet.

Ban's comments echoed the concerns of China and other developing countries, which say rich nations have a historical responsibility for global warming because their factories released carbon emissions into the atmosphere long before the climate effects were known.

"The climate change phenomenon has been caused by the industrialization of the developed world," Ban said.

Many rich nations including the U.S. and European Union say the firewall between developed and developing countries that has guided the two-decade-old climate process in the past no longer reflects the world today and isn't helpful in dealing with the problem.

Most of the emissions now come from the developing world, and China has overtaken the U.S. to become the world's top carbon polluter.

How to divide the burden of emission cuts is at the core of discussions to create a new global climate treaty that would apply to all nations. The only binding pact so far, the Kyoto Protocol, covers only the emissions of industrialized countries. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Battling their way through snowy Stockholm

People struggle against the wind and drifting snow in Stockholm on Wednesday. Forecasters have issued a Class 2 storm warning for central and southern Sweden, saying Stockholm could face up to 30 centimetres of snow. Traffic was also hit hard, with Sweden's main airport coming more or less to a standstill, delaying the anticipated arrival of some of this year's Nobel Prize laureates. Wednesday was the planned arrival date for most of the Nobel luminaries, who will participate in several events before they pick up their prizes at a ceremony in Stockholm on Dec. 10. ANDERS WIKLUND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Driver's ed. Stray dogs taught how to drive will show off skills on live TV

It was about three weeks into the dogs' five weeks of training when Mark Vette knew he could teach them to drive a car.

The animal trainer and his team, whose film credits include The Chronicles of Narnia, are confident that rescue dogs Monty, Ginger and Porter will be able to pilot a modified Mini Countryman for about 100 metres on their own.

Showtime is Monday evening, New Zealand time, on live television.

They've been trained as part of a campaign by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to prove that stray dogs are, in Vette's words, "just as smart as the $1,500 dogs pumped out from puppy mills that are badly bred."

Monty, dumped at the SPCA by his owners, had behavioural problems. Porter was found wandering the streets of Auckland. Ginny had been seized by authorities when she was discovered, emaciated and terrified, locked in a bathroom.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The SPCA has developed a doggie driver's-ed program to prove that stray dogs can be trained just as well as purebreds. SCREEN GRAB

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Egypt descends into turmoil

Cairo. Protests turn violent over President Mohammed Morsi's new constitution

Egypt descended into political turmoil on Wednesday over the constitution drafted by Islamist allies of President Mohammed Morsi, and at least 211 people were wounded as supporters and opponents battled each other with firebombs, rocks and sticks outside the presidential palace.

Four more presidential aides resigned in protest over Morsi's handling of the crisis, and a key opponent of the Islamist president likened Morsi's rule to that of ousted authoritarian leader Hosni Mubarak.

Both sides were digging in for a long struggle, with the opposition vowing more protests and rejecting any dialogue unless the charter is rescinded, and Morsi pressing relentlessly forward with plans for a Dec. 15 constitutional referendum.

"The solution is to go to the ballot box," declared Mahmoud Ghozlan, a spokesman for Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, asserting the charter was "the best constitution Egypt ever had."

The clashes outside the presidential palace in Cairo's Heliopolis district marked an escalation in the deepening crisis.

It was the first time supporters of rival camps fought each other since last year's anti-Mubarak uprising, when the authoritarian leader's loyalists sent sword-wielding supporters on horses and camels into Cairo's Tahrir square in what became one of the uprising's bloodiest days.

The large scale and intensity of the fighting marked a milestone in Egypt's rapidly entrenched schism, pitting Morsi's Brotherhood and ultra-conservative Islamists in one camp against liberals, leftists and Christians in the other.

The violence spread to other parts of the country later Wednesday. Anti-Morsi protesters stormed and set ablaze the Brotherhood offices in Suez and Ismailia, east of Cairo, and there were clashes in the industrial city of Mahallah and the province of Menoufiyah in the Nile Delta north of the capital.

Compounding Morsi's woes, four of his advisers resigned, joining two other members of his 17-member advisory panel who have abandoned him since the crisis began.

Mohamed ElBaradei, a leading opposition reform advocate, said Morsi's rule was "no different" than Mubarak's.

"In fact, it is perhaps even worse," the Nobel Peace Prize laureate told a news conference after he accused the president's supporters of a "vicious and deliberate" attack on peaceful demonstrators outside the palace.

The opposition is demanding that Morsi rescind the decrees giving him nearly unrestricted powers and shelve the controversial draft constitution the president's Islamist allies rushed through last week.

The huge scale of the opposition protests has dealt a blow to the legitimacy of the new charter, which Morsi's opponents contend allows religious authorities too much influence over legislation, threatens to restrict freedom of expression and opens the door to Islamist control over day-to-day life.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Mohammed Morsi's supporters clash with opponents outside Cairo's presidential palace on Wednesday. HASSAN AMMAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I voted for Morsi to get rid of Hosni Mubarak. I now regret it."

Nadia el-Shafie, a protester of the Morsi regime, yells at Muslim Brotherhood supporters on a side street in Cairo.

Congo rebels planning talks with government

Congo's M23 rebels are sending a delegation to Kampala, Uganda, to negotiate with the Congolese government on Thursday, the rebels' president said.

"Our delegation will drive to Kampala for talks,'' M23 president Jean-Marie Runiga told The Associated Press Wednesday.

Runiga said the talks with representatives of President Joseph Kabila's Kinshasa government must be wide-ranging negotiations to cover constitutional and governance issues and should include the Congolese opposition and civic organizations.

The prospect of negotiations in neighbouring Uganda comes as the strategic eastern Congo city of Goma, with one million people, struggles to return to normal life.

Goma was held for two weeks by the M23 rebels, who now remain just three kilometres away in the hills above the city. Although many shops in Goma have reopened, most banks have remained closed, paralyzing the city's business.

The rebels say they are fighting for better governance and democracy in Congo. But the real reason for their rebellion is Rwanda's desire to annex the mineral-rich mountains of eastern Congo, according to a recently published report by a UN group of experts.

Despite the uncertainty, the UN peacekeeping force is working with the Congolese government to get Goma back to normal life.

In recent weeks, the enormous, jungle-covered nation of Congo, whose capital is about 1,600 kilometres away from Goma, inched closer to war with its smaller, but more developed neighbour, Rwanda, which is accused of sending soldiers and arms to the M23.

Congo Interior Minister Richard Muyej, speaking to reporters in Goma, said that they are working hard to fill the power vacuum that was left by the rebels' departure.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Congolese M23 rebel president Jean Marie Runiga. JEROME DELAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Negotiations

The Rwanda-backed rebels have threatened to retake Goma unless talks begin.

- Despite their retreat, the government has not yet OK'd negotiations.
- A government spokesman said President Joseph Kinshasa would listen to their grievances and respond.

Politics

Conservatives quietly defer gun marking rules

The Conservative government has quietly shelved rules on serial numbers for guns that would have helped keep Canada in compliance with its international conventions on arms smuggling.

The decision came through an order-in-council — a cabinet decree — that was not formally announced by the Harper government but has been posted among dozens of other orders on the Privy Council Office website.

A single paragraph on the website states the long-delayed regulations, which were scheduled to come into force on Dec. 1, "are being deferred."

A spokeswoman for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews confirmed, following an inquiry by The Canadian Press, that the regulations have been pushed off to December 2013.

Toews' spokeswoman, Julie Carmichael, would not comment on why no news release accompanied the policy change. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec

Mother of three dead kids faces murder charges

The father of three dead children looked on impassively from the front row of a courtroom on Wednesday as their mother was charged with three counts of first-degree murder.

Sonia Blanchette appeared unsteady and dazed as she shuffled into the courtroom three days after the children were found dead. A court-appointed lawyer requested that she be evaluated to determine whether she is fit to face criminal charges.

Blanchette did not say a word during her arraignment and is scheduled to return to court on Dec. 14.

Provincial police began questioning Blanchette following her release from hospital earlier on Wednesday.

Police have not yet confirmed how Anais, 2, Loic, 4, and Laurelie, 5, died. They were found dead at Blanchette's home in Drummondville on Sunday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ontario

Raw milk advocate charged in theft of sheep

An Ontario farmer embroiled in a legal battle with the province over producing and selling raw milk is now facing charges arising from the removal of sheep from a quarantined farm.

Michael Schmidt, Montana Jones, Suzanne Atkinson and Robert Pinnell are charged following an investigation into the removal of 31 sheep from an Eastern Ontario farm on April 2.

Glencolton Farms, a co-op operated by Schmidt and Pinnell, was raided on Aug. 2 by the CFIA in connection with the Shropshire sheep taken from a federally-quarantined farm in Northumberland County near Kingston, Ont.

Earlier this year, Schmidt won the right to appeal his conviction in 2011 for producing, selling and distributing raw milk, which is illegal in Canada.

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EU slams major electronics firms with $1.9B fine

Cartel fine. 'There are victims: Millions and millions of citizens,' says EU antitrust chief

The European Union on Wednesday imposed its biggest ever cartel fine of about $1.9 billion on seven companies for fixing the market of television and computer monitor tubes.

The EU's Commission ruled that, for a decade ending in 2006, the companies — including Philips, LG Electronics and Panasonic — artificially set prices, shared markets and restricted their output at the expense of millions of consumers.

EU antitrust commissioner Joaquin Almunia said that the companies' actions "feature all the worst kinds of anticompetitive behaviour that are strictly forbidden to companies doing business in Europe."

Commissioner for competition Joaquin Almunia speaks in Brussels, Wednesday, after the EU issued the largest cartel fine in its history. YVES LOGGHE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tubes were the essential part of television screens and computer monitors before they were replaced by LCD and plasma flatscreens. The cathode ray tubes accounted for up to 70 per cent of the cost of a screen, the Commission said.

Alumina added that the tubes' cost gave "an indication of the serious harm" the companies had caused. "There are victims: Millions and millions of citizens."

Philips and LG Electronics, which acted jointly and separately, were fined a combined $1.3 billion while Panasonic was punished with a $203 million fine, adding up to more if combined fines and affiliates were included.

Despite its co-operation with the Commission probe, Philips said in a statement it planned to appeal the fine since it considered it "disproportionate and unjust."

Other companies fined were Samsung SDI, Technicolor, MTPD and Toshiba. Chunghwa of Taiwan escaped fines as it was the first to reveal the cartel to the EU. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRTC takes on Oprah

Oprah Winfrey appears at an interview with Late Show host David Letterman at his alma mater, Ball State University, in Muncie, Ind., on Nov. 26. Canada's federal broadcast regulator is taking on the television queen with a hearing next Tuesday into whether her Canadian network's programming fits the channel's educational mandate. Corus Entertainment Inc., which holds the licence for Oprah Winfrey Network in this country, said that nothing in the channel's licensing requirements prevents educational content from being "entertaining and engaging." MICHAEL CONROY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Real estate

Group launches takeover bid for mall owner

A consortium led by King-Sett Capital and including the Ontario Pension Board has launched a $4.4-billion takeover offer for Primaris Retail Real Estate Investment Trust, one of Canada's largest shopping mall owners. The deal, if successful, would also see RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust buy five regional malls and three other shopping centres currently owned by Primaris for $1.1 billion. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 100.84¢ (+0.16¢)

TSX 12,157.29 (+20.11)

OIL $87.88 US (-62¢)

GOLD $1,693.80 US (-$2)

Natural gas: $3.69 US (+15¢)
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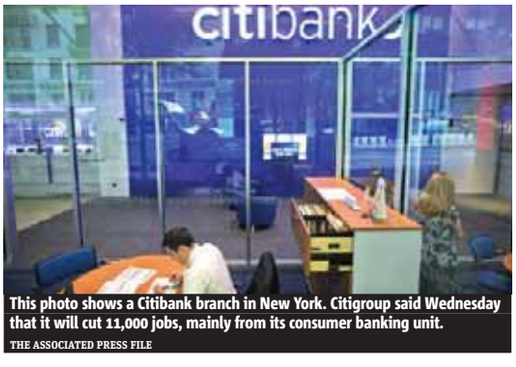
Citigroup will slash 11,000 jobs worldwide



This photo shows a Citibank branch in New York. Citigroup said Wednesday that it will cut 11,000 jobs, mainly from its consumer banking unit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Citigroup said Wednesday that it will cut 11,000 jobs, a bold early move by new CEO Michael Corbat. The cuts amount to about four per cent of Citi's workforce of 262,000.

The bulk of the cuts, about 6,200, will come from Citi's consumer banking unit, which handles everyday functions like branches and checking accounts.

Citi said that it will sell or scale back consumer operations in Pakistan, Paraguay, Romania, Turkey and Uruguay and focus on 150 cities around the world "that have the highest growth potential in consumer banking."

U.S. banking blues

- Job cuts are a familiar template in a U.S. banking industry still under the long shadow of the 2008 financial crisis.
- Banks are searching for ways to make money as new regulations crimp some of their former revenue streams, like trading for their own profit or marketing credit cards to college students.
- Customers are still nervous about borrowing money in an uncertain economy. And they are still filing lawsuits over industry sins, like risky mortgage lending, that helped cause the crisis.

The bank did not say how many jobs it will cut in the United States.

Citi fared worse than other banks in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. It nearly collapsed, had to take two taxpayer-funded bailout loans, and became the poster child for banks that had grown too big and disorderly.

After a long stretch of empire-building, it has been shrinking for the past several years, shedding units and trying to find a business model that's more streamlined and efficient. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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CRTC denies request to review Telus's foreign ownership

Telecom. Regulator says it's satisfied with way Vancouver firm complies with requirements

The CRTC has turned down a request by Wind Mobile to review Telus's foreign ownership.
THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The CRTC has decided not to review the level of foreign ownership in Vancouver telecom company Telus Corp., saying Telus is following the compliance rules.

The telecom regulator said Tuesday that it has denied a request by new wireless competitor Wind Mobile to review foreign ownership of Telus.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission said it's satisfied with Telus' mechanisms to comply with foreign ownership requirements, which must not exceed 33.3 per cent.

Wind Mobile failed to demonstrate that Telus' board of directors had any reason to question information received about the level of foreign ownership, the CRTC said in its written decision. "Further, the commission is satisfied that Telus' mechanisms for ensuring its compliance are consistent with the provisions and requirements established in the regulations," the CRTC said.

The CRTC also said the onus is on carriers at all times to ensure they are complying with foreign ownership limits.

"The commission notes that the regulations establish the type of documentation required to demonstrate a shareholder's Canadian status. They also establish that, before taking any additional action, the carrier's board of directors must have information that causes it to believe that the declarations it has received are incorrect."

Telus spokesman Shawn Hall said Wednesday the decision verifies that Telus' foreign ownership controls are effective. "The issue that Globalive put forward simply didn't exist," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

By the numbers

32.6%

When Toronto-based Globalive — the parent company of wireless carrier Wind Mobile — made the complaint last summer, Telus had reported that its foreign ownership was 32.6 per cent. More recently, Telus said its foreign ownership had dropped to about 15 per cent, largely due to a U.S.-based hedge fund selling a chunk of its stake in the company.

Dramatic turnaround

CBC gets top marks from Information Commissioner

The CBC has moved to the head of the class in the federal information watchdog's books. The public broadcaster received an A for its handling of Access to Information requests in 2011-12, up from an F for its performance two years ago.

Information Commissioner Suzanne Legault will release the latest report cards for the CBC and Canada Post on Thursday.

A copy of the CBC's assessment, obtained by The Canadian Press, says the broadcaster has made "dramatic improvements" since getting the failing grade for its 2009-10 efforts.

The access law allows people who pay $5 to seek access to federal files ranging from expense reports and email messages to briefing notes and internal audits. Federal departments and agencies are supposed to respond to requests within 30 days, but often take much longer — sometimes missing their own extended deadlines.

In 2009-10, the CBC failed to answer almost 60 per cent of requests within the required timelines. It took an average of 158 days for the broadcaster to respond. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Starbucks brews up expansion plans

A Starbucks beverage cup is pictured outside a Chicago-area store Wednesday. Starbucks, the world's biggest coffee company, is planning to add at least 1,500 cafés in the U.S. over the next five years. The plan, which would boost the number of Starbucks cafés in the country by about 13 per cent, was announced Wednesday at the company's investor day in New York. Taking into account Canada and South America, the company aims to add a total of 3,000 new cafés in its broader Americas region. CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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23 items linked to suspended lab cleared

Health Canada. Companies asked to halt sales of products tested by Chemi until their safety can be confirmed

A day after revoking the licence of a Toronto-area chemical testing lab following the discovery of falsified test results, Health Canada says the number of possibly affected products is less than initially believed.

Paul Glover of the department's Health Products and Food Branch said Wednesday the number of products it is "concerned about" at Chemi Pharmaceutical Inc. has dropped by 23 since Tuesday.

Retesting

Health Canada initially said it had uncovered 53 products that needed to be retested and was waiting to hear from manufacturers about another 25 products, which may also need to be re-analyzed.

The agency announced Tuesday it had yanked the lab's licence, saying it found falsified results in tests involving a "wide range of products," including medications and natural food products.

It alleges that bogus results were provided to companies that had contracted Chemi's services.

Chemi says records were falsified not by the company, but by a recently fired employee at the Mississauga, Ont., lab.

Appearing on CTV's Canada AM early Wednesday, Glover said the list has been whittled down "through the co-operation of the companies" whose products were involved.

"They've either had other tests done or had other testing done in the interim and that gave us assurance that these products are safe and we're able to remove them from the list," he said.

A list posted on Health Canada's website has been updated to reflect the changes.

The agency has said there is no evidence that the health of Canadians has been compromised.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Charity begins with Gangnam Style

Volunteer workers, dressed in Santa Claus costumes, perform South Korean rapper PSY's Gangnam Style dance during a visit to give Christmas gifts to prematurely born babies in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday.

LEE JIN-MAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Words of the year: Capitalism and socialism

Thanks to the U.S. presidential election, socialism and capitalism are forever wed as Merriam-Webster's most looked-up words of 2012.

Traffic for the unlikely pair on the company's website about doubled this year from the year before as the health-care debate heated up and discussion intensified over "American capitalism" versus "European socialism," said the editor at large, Peter Sokolowski.

One-day wonder

"... that's a bunch of malarkey."

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden in a televised debate with Mitt Romney running mate Paul Ryan. Look-ups spiked 3,000 per cent, the largest in a single 24-hour period.

Democracy, globalization, marriage and bigot — all touched by politics — made the Top 10, in no particular order. The latter two were driven in part by the fight for same-sex marriage acceptance.

Other words in Merriam-Webster's Top 10 for 2012:

• Touche, thanks in part to Survivor contestant Kat Edorsson misusing the word to mean "tough luck" rather than point well made.

• Schadenfreude, meaning taking pleasure in the misery of others, was used broadly in the media after the election.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

I'VE GOT THE HYPERBOLIC PLAGUE, AND THERE'S NO KNOWN CURE

HE SAYS...
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

I'm sick.

Not in the fun movie way where you get to take over cities and fight with Batman or Spider-Man.

Not in the whisky-commercial way where you whisper something amazing to your blond friend and her eyes go all wide because you're so darn naughty, you five-o'clock-shadowed bad boy.

And (this is the worst part) not even in the cough-cough cold-flu way where I get to admit that, yes, men are wimps and women are warriors and that's fine so long as I get some chicken soup and a pat on the head, many thanks.

No, instead I get to be sick in the way where you have a bunch of disparate symptoms and the doctors run tests and poke you with sticks and grimace at their clipboards before finally saying that your problem is "idiosymptomatic," which is doctorese for "I don't know. What do *you* think?"

Immune-system overdrive

My skin responds to soap as if it's a bar of plague (99 44/100th per cent pestilent), and to my clothes as if it's No. 30 sandpaper. You could get a reasonable steam going if I were to lie down in the middle of a sauna and you poured water on my groin.

Fortunately, I have a theory. I think, after many years of working in the businesses of newspapers, radio and the Internet, that I've become infected with the media.

I'll explain. My symptoms point to some sort of autoimmune problem, which sounds like I'm impervious to the War on the Car, but actually means that my body overreacts to everything.

For instance, my immune system is fighting a major battle on my face right now. I'm not sure what's at stake, but my nose appears to be a strategic ridge of some sort, perhaps as a lookout for the vast expanse of cheek that lies beyond. Sometimes I swear I can hear a little voice yell "Charge!" though that may just be the mild fever.

My skin responds to soap as if it's a bar of plague (99 44/100th per cent pestilent), and to my clothes as if it's No. 30 sandpaper. You could get a reasonable steam going if I were to lie down in the middle of a sauna and you poured water on my groin.

On top of all that, previous illnesses have taught me that my blood clots too well. I'm a superhero, basically, though one of those anarchist ones who responds with disproportionate force.

Which brings me back to my theory that I've been infected with media: I don't mean that I've hooked up with Jennifer in the sports department or anything — I just mean that, after years spent in media organizations, my immune system has responded to problems like a typical journalist.

If a normal person noticed one bad thing in society — a stabbing, say — he'd call it an unfortunate fluke. Two instances, a coincidence. Three, a cause for concern.

But if a journalist notices one bad thing in society, it's a "tragedy." Two problems is a "rash." Three problems is an "epidemic." As you can see, we've been using medical terms all along.

I'm sure if you were to take a microscope and look into my bloodstream, you'd see a bunch of T cells wearing press hats and carrying notebooks, scurrying around in a panicked clot asking frantic questions in unison, ostensibly at invading viruses but often at nothing — or at a red blood cell shaped like a celebrity.

Happily, I know the best way to shut down a journalist. I plan to get ego massages until this problem subsides.

My gut tells me it's Christmas soon

ALEX GREENHOUGH AND PALOMA ORDONEZ MORAN/UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Science photography

Snowy close-up of a human intestine

This Christmas scene, reminiscent of festive trees, is in fact an extreme close-up of a human intestine. It was captured by Alex Greenhough and Paloma Ordonez Moran of the University of Bristol, U.K., who are researching colorectal cancer. The "snow" was added by the scientists using a photo-editing program.

METRO

Q&A

Image was 'a bit of fun'

What is this image?
Alex Greenhough: It's a study of the human intestine using a confocal microscope, to detect the presence of certain proteins and cell nuclei in the organ.

More specifically, my colleague and I are studying the protein beta-catenin to understand why it sometimes becomes deregulated in cells of the intestine and why it leads to the development of colorectal cancer.

By doing this research, we hope to further the understanding of cellular mechanisms that determine whether cells become cancerous, which we hope will lead to new opportunities for cancer prevention and therapy.

But this image seems more than science to you...
AG: Yes, the organized crypt-villus structures (of the intestine) in the image reminded me of Christmas trees. When I heard about the university's Art of Science photo competition, I remembered the image we had captured during our research, so I quickly decorated the trees with snow (white) and baubles (red) using Photoshop software as a bit of fun.

What do you hope the audience will take away from your image?
AG: That scientists are imaginative and artistic, and not the stereotypical eccentrics in white coats.

METRO

Metropolitan Panel

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Would you pay $7 for Starbucks' new 'Geisha' bean coffee?

0%
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83%
NO, THE LATTE FACTOR IS BAD ENOUGH FOR MY BUDGET
17%
YES, BUT IT BETTER BE THE BEST COFFEE OF MY LIFE

Twitter

@christyclarkbc: @patbellbc & his moustache free face is hosting a #skills4bc twitter townhall tonight at 7pm. Maybe he will share a photo of his new look.

@VanMayorsOffice: Engaged City Task Force: "A remarkably talented & diverse group of local citizens from all corners of #Vancouver"

@jessicagares980: My excitement for @cknworphans-fund Pledge Day is off the charts! @bifnaked will be joining us at Hotel Vancouver to show support

@suitoflights: Cool story that a few of the Canucks are playing road hockey relatively close to where I live a half hour before I'm off work.

@CJBradford1: Watching bruins vs Canucks re-runs on tv right now, they better end the lockout today #dontpokethebear

metro

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Weekend forecast calls for El Niño at the Orpheum

Vancouver Bach Choir. The 140-voice symphonic choir presents the Canadian premiere of John Adams' retelling of Christ's birth, and features a handful of internationally renowned soloists

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

They're Bach.

You don't get to bust out old Arnold references very often when writing a local arts column, so tip of the hat to the Vancouver Bach Choir for presenting me with an irresistible opportunity to do so.

The 140-voice symphonic choir presents the Canadian premiere of John Adams' nativity oratorio El Niño (The Infant), a retelling of Christ's birth that's hailed as a Messiah (Handel) for the modern age.

"[It's] rapidly entered the yuletide canon for choirs and symphonies around the world — and it is easy to see why," says VBC musical director Leslie Dala. "The intelligent, emotional telling of Christ's birth is uniquely suited to our era, drawing from many sources beyond the Bible to weave a rich musical and narrative tapestry.

"Adams' version of the story is one that is not meant for just religious individuals, but humanity as a whole, encouraging us to meditate on how every precious life is its own small miracle."

This performance features some internationally recognized soloists. Joining the VBC on stage: soprano Jessica Rivera, mezzo soprano Krisztina Szabó, baritone Gregory Dahl, and the counter-tenor trio of Daniel Bubeck, Steven Rickards and Brian Cummings.

So, you know, it's probably going to be good. So good you just might want to … stick around.

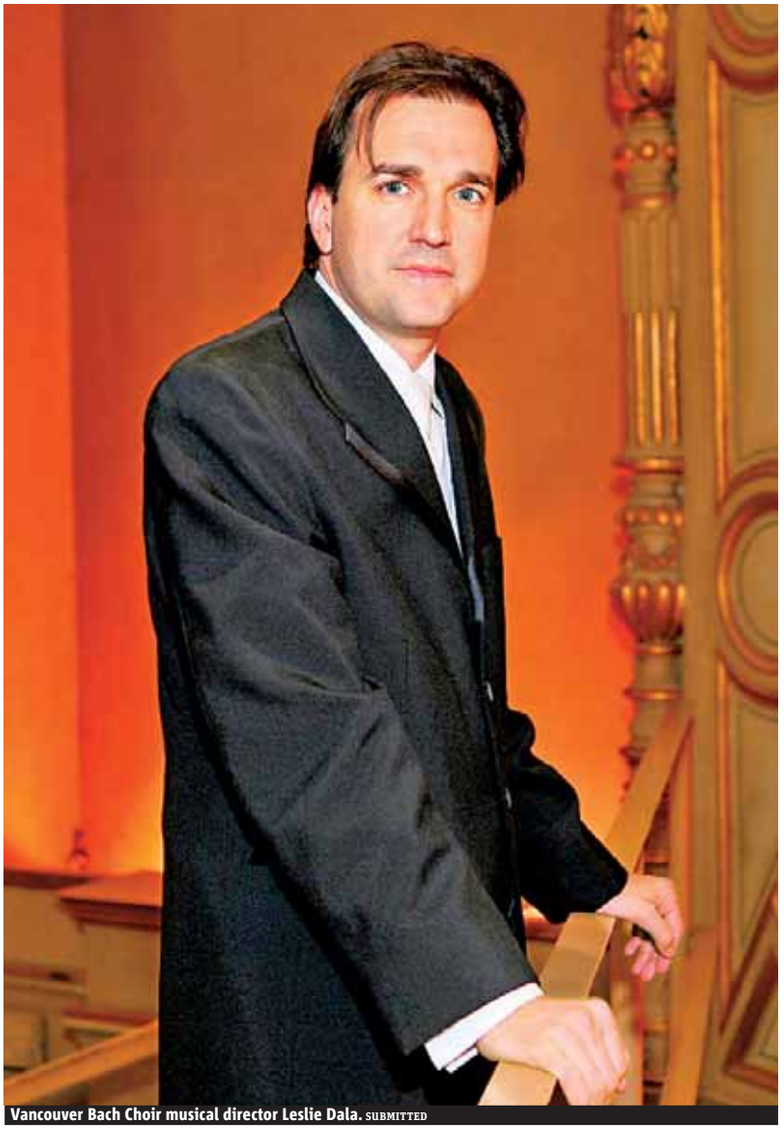
See what I did there? (Sorry.)

The Vancouver Bach Choir performs El Niño at the Orpheum Saturday night (8 p.m). Tickets, $25-59. More information at VancouverBachChoir.com.

Sigur Ros

The ethereal Icelandic crooners bring new kind of artistry to their latest album — with the help of some filmmakers

- **Valtari.** The brilliant Icelandic band's got a new album and, to complement it, they gave a dozen filmmakers a little bit of money — and complete artistic freedom — to create whatever came into each of their heads when they listened to the songs. No script approval, no consultation with the band, record label or the other filmmakers. See what they came up with on Saturday night (10 p.m.) at the Vancity Theatre. Check out Viff.org for more information.



Vancouver Bach Choir musical director Leslie Dala. SUBMITTED

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Flashpoint ends with a bang

Series finale. The first Canadian series since Due South to find international success is racing to the finish with a pair of heart-stopping episodes

Enrico Colantoni as Sgt. Gregory Parker in CTV's Flashpoint, Canada's cross-border cop smash. HANDOUT

Canada's cross-border cop smash Flashpoint is about to go out with a bang with an explosive two-part finale sending the elite team of Toronto officers racing to stop a serial bomber from taking the entire city hostage.

Flashpoint star Enrico Colantoni said it's a thrilling end to the made-in-Canada procedural, which airs Part 1 of a tense finale on Thursday. Part 2 airs Dec. 13.

Expectations are big for the conclusion, with Colantoni admitting that even he wondered how writers could adequately wrap up one of the country's top cop shows. Its nail-biting life-or-death crises have been a weekly tradition for five seasons.

"The expectation was always: How are they going to close it? How are they going to end it? And when you're used to doing a show that's operating at nine (out of 10) and 10 out of 10, you wonder what they will do. And they did (it)," Colantoni said from the set last June, where hallways were filled with "for sale" items including discarded wardrobe and a mish-mash of props.

"For the first time, my character really has to go outside of his comfort zone.

Quoted

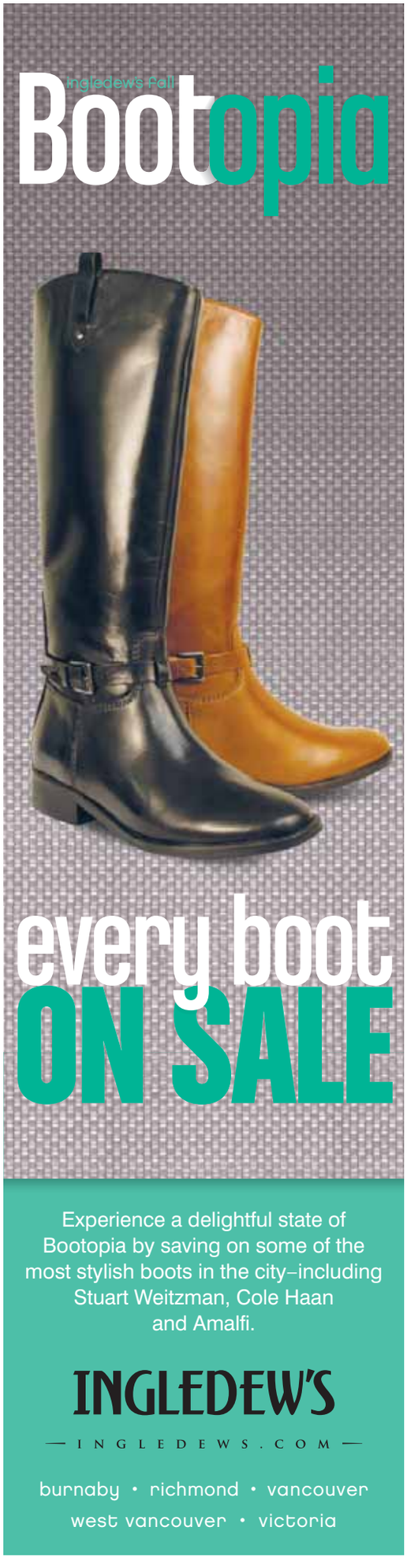
"The expectation was always: How are they going to close it?"

Enrico Colantoni
Flashpoint star

... There's no room for peace in these last two episodes, there's no room for calm, there's no room for stepping back. There's only being ahead of the situation and really living in the solution of it and (thinking) 'How are we going do this?' Because it's so outrageous and so crazy."

There's no question that Flashpoint has made its mark on the Canadian TV industry, proving to skeptics that homegrown fare could be popular, acclaimed and internationally successful all at the same time.

The slick show debuted four years ago on CTV and CBS, drawing 1.13 million viewers in Canada and 8.72 million viewers in the United States. It was the first Canadian series since Due South to air in network prime time on both sides of the border, paving the way for a wave of other Canadian series to also strike U.S. deals. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Rihanna ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Rihanna getting set to marry Chris Brown?

Anyone who follows Rihanna's Twitter feed knows that Chris Brown is definitely back in her life in a big way.

But the latest news still comes as a shock.

Rihanna is reportedly planning to marry Brown in a secret New Year's Eve ceremony while the pair are visiting her native Barbados for the holidays, according to Hollyscoop.

One person not too thrilled about the rumoured wedding? Rihanna's mom.

"She called Rihanna to yell at her, asking what she's doing with her life," a source says.

Quote

"She called Rihanna to yell at her, asking what she's doing with her life."

Source
Talking about Rihanna's mother's reaction to the news she may marry Chris Brown.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Laxative lands LeAnn Rimes in more trouble

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

There was a time when LeAnn Rimes was world-famous for her talent.

Right? It's hard for me to remember that long ago.

Now she's just known for the petty drama with her long-suffering husband, Eddie Cibrian, and his ex, Brandi Glanville.

The latest?

Glanville is professing to a tabloid that she doesn't want Rimes around her sons, Mason, 9, and Jake, 5, because, according to her, they mistake her laxatives for candy.

"I, unfortunately, don't find her to be stable and I don't want her around my kids when Eddie's not there — or at least the nanny, his parents, someone," Glanville says of Rimes to Us Magazine.

"Mason, my eldest, ate some of Le's candies and got extremely ill. And Le's candies are laxatives. She has one in every purse. Mason found one on the floor and thought it was a Skittle! They don't keep sugar in the house," Glanville explains.

"He thought he finally found candy."

You know, you'd think in between learning shapes and colours, L.A. preschools would also teach life lessons to children being raised by celebrity parents.

They could teach the difference between a Skittle and a laxative or the difference between your nanny and your mother — the list is endless.

Twitter

@ZacharyQuinto
if you are taking pictures with your iPad: i have absolutely no interest in taking our relationship any further than the picture.

@rustyrockets
I'm in Melbourne. Where do I go? What do I do? Who will love me?

@RealMichelleT
Getting the Final Jeopardy answer. #Priceless

@Joan_Rivers
The IRS seized Lindsay's bank accounts to settle her tax debt of $233,904. Why bother? They'll get the same amount by returning her empties.

Eddie Murphy

Murphy's movies do little for studio profits

Eddie Murphy has earned the dubious honour of the Most Overpaid Actor in Hollywood, according to Forbes magazine's annual list. For every dollar that a studio paid Murphy for his last three movies, the studio earned $2.30, the worst rate of return for a star in the business.

His only film released this year, the poorly reviewed A Thousand Words, pulled in roughly $20 million worldwide but cost an estimated $40 million to produce.

Second on the list is Katherine Heigl, earning studios an average of $3.40 for every dollar she's paid.

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Easy to do holiday 'dos

Kristen Stewart's hair stylist Adir Abergel walks us through festive hairstyles that are simple enough to do on the fly in your bedroom, but look like you've spent hours in a salon.

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

The low chignon

"This look is classic and chic and can do no wrong," Abergel says. "It's both sophisticated and modern and will work for any kind of event you're heading off to."

1 Apply a volumizing styling whip to damp hair and blow-dry.

2 Create a centre part that is low and flat and secure a low ponytail with a hair band.

3 Wrap the hair around the ponytail to create a low bun.

4 Secure your hair using some bobby pins.

5 Spray the entire look with hairspray in order to hold everything in place.

Get the look

SHINE: Frederic Fekkai Brilliant Glossing cream $25, fekkai.com

HOLD: Bumble & Bumble Curl Conscious Holding Foam $28, bumbleand-bumble.com

Casual waves

"It's no surprise that we often see this look on Hollywood celebrities as well as models when they are off-duty. These easy waves are naturally beautiful, laid-back and glamorous at the same time," Abergel explains. "And it's also much easier to copy than you'd think."

1 Apply UV protectant spray to damp hair before blowing it dry.

2 Separate your dry hair from the front to the back behind the ears and clip up.

3 Take the back section of your hair, split it in two, and clip up one of the sides

4 Take one vertical section of hair from top to bottom

5 Grab a hot iron and roll away from your face (as you roll, make sure you twist at the same time).

6 Once the hair is heated through, gently take it off the roller and let it set so the waves cool in place.

7 Repeat the above on other side.

8 Once you've gone through all the hair, run your fingers though to get your desired look.

9 Finish off with some hairspray to keep your look for longer without allowing the hair to go stiff or sticky.

The pin-straight blow-dry

"This elegant look is perfect for showing off shiny, healthy hair, and who doesn't want that? Glossy hair is the perfect accessory to any outfit and this sleek look is the best way to show it off," Abergel says.

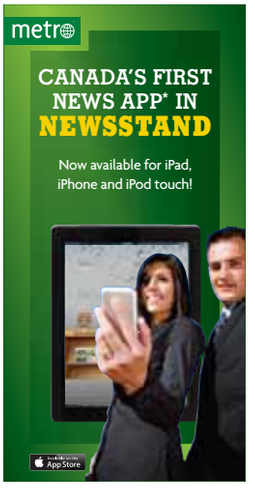
1 Apply a lifting and texturizing spray or gel to damp hair at the roots and blow dry by scrunching your hair until it's completely dry.

2 Divide the top of your hair into two sections. Take the front section and brush it forward with a large round brush. Wrap the hair around the brush, roll it up and blow-dry it out slowly in order to smooth the hair as much as possible. Repeat with the back section.

3 After smoothing the hair out, wrap each section around a large velcro roller and clip it into place.

4 Flat iron the rest of hair in order to straighten it one section at a time. Focus on the middle and the ends of the hair so that the volume is kept at the roots. Remove the rollers, comb out both sections and flat iron from the middle to ends of the hair only, not from the roots.

5 Set the look using hairspray and a glossing mist.



Twitter

JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

IN THIS HECTIC MODERN WORLD, TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND, AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

@Jeanne_Beker: With the stunning @SarahGadon who's receiving a Crystal Award today from @WIFT #crystalawards

@Jeanne_Beker: My beautiful mom, circa 1957. She'll be 92 next Sunday!! (Bless her....)

@Jeanne_Beker: With top Cdn Dior make-up artist Annemarie Vandermeer @TheHudsonsBayCo @ Sherway_Gardens

@Jeanne_Beker: Sleek, sassy and seductive are the operative words @gretconstantine

The Kit

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Ottawa

Lainy

Political Analyst and thrift store enthusiast

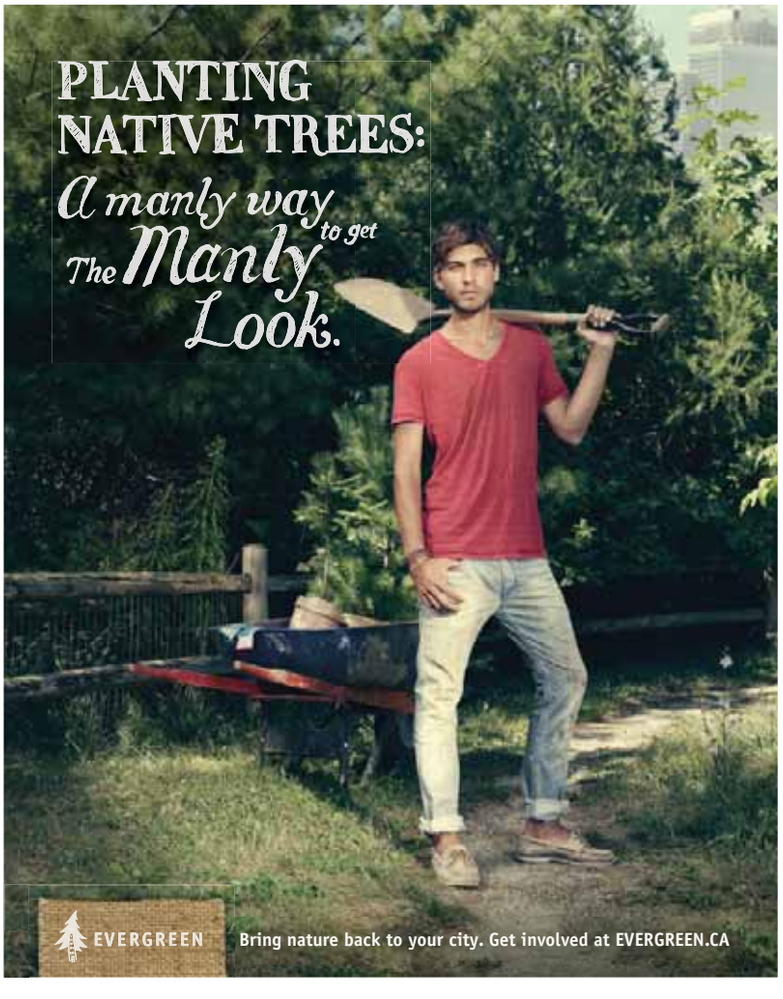
Age: 34

What she's wearing
Vintage boots from Kensington Market, pants bought at Marshalls, blazer by Alfred Sung, scarf was a gift from a friend.

Her inspiration
"I'm a sucker for thrift stores and bargains — nothing is more fun than finding a great deal on style!"

THE KIT PHOTOBLOGGER: JUSTYNA BARANIECKI, CHAMELEONIC.CO

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT — AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM, AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!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NAVIGATE YOURSELF INTO A NEW CAREER AT THE VANCOUVER EDUCATION & CAREER FAIR

It is easy to fall into a trap that has you thinking the sole point of work is to make enough money to live comfortably. While making money is important in your career planning, it is definitely not the only component. If you are unhappy with what you are doing every day, feeling unsatisfied will leave you feeling frustrated and unable to enjoy going into to work. Wouldn't you rather have a job you are passionate about and excited to head to on a daily basis? Whether you are looking to enter the workforce for the first time or considering a career change, the first step is to uncover activities that bring excitement and joy to your day.

DISCOVERING THE POSSIBILITIES

One of the first steps in considering a career change is to think carefully about what really drives you. It is important to first discover your interests and passions. You will be amazed at how the doors open to new career that you may not have considered previously. Once you have determined this, you can start the search to find the right career. At Education and Career Fair events, you will be surprised at how you can fit your passions into a certain industry and love what you choose to do.

It may seem daunting to think about a move into a new career. You may find that with the right planning and assessment of your skills, a new career is possible at any stage of life. To get you started on your path, consider this:

1. Look back at what you enjoyed as a child and remember your hobbies and interests. Try to recall what you had chosen when asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" It is not surprising to find this is what you are passionate about. Even though the goals may change, it's a great place to start.
2. What are your true values? What do you value in life? Is it travel? Being your own boss? These values tend to be ingrained in your personality and will often lead you in the right direction when choosing your career.
3. Explore your options and be open to new possibilities. Research is a good start. Attend education and career fairs.
4. Listen to your heart. You will know when you've come up on a career opportunity that truly inspires you.
5. Get professional help. Career advisers are a great place to start, and they will assist with narrowing down your choices. Assessing transferrable skills you already have can pave a path to new career options.

If you are unsure of which career to work towards, try to keep your options open. Try new things and do not be afraid to admit when something may not be right for you. Gaining experience in different fields or choosing a course of study will leave your options open to many different career paths. Do not put limits on yourself or your options. Industries and career paths are endless.

At the Education & Career Fair events, you will have the opportunity to sit in on seminars, get the latest industry news and look at options to upgrade your skills. All of the exhibitors and seminar schedules are listed at educationcareerfairs.com.

Visit the Education & Career Fairs at the Vancouver Convention Centre - East Facility on Friday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tickets are $5 at the door.

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Avia Employment Services is a division of Back in Motion Rehab Inc.
Avia provides services in Coquitlam, Langley, Port Coquitlam, Richmond and Surrey-Newton.

Canada | British Columbia | Canada Starts Here | The BC Jobs Plan

The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

Floor Plan - Vancouver

Booth #	Name of Organization
97	IMI University Centre, Switzerland
98	University of Northampton
100	Southwestern Oregon University
101	Hartpury College
102	Class Afloat - West Island College International
103	Seattle Central Community College
104	Eastern Oregon University
105	Across the Pond
106	Hess Education Canada Ltd.
107	Learnhub
108	Laureate Hospitality Education
109	Domus Academy Spa
110	GlobaLinks Learning Abroad
111	Tel Aviv University
112	FIDM - Fashion Institute of Design + Merchandising
113	American University of Barbados - School of Medicine
114	Swiss Hotel Management School
115	Xavier University
116	Satakunta University of Finland
200	Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts
202	Vancouver Career College
203	Blanche Macdonald Centre
204	Justice Institute of British Columbia
205	St. John Ambulance
206	Pacific Audio Visual Institute
207	Eton College
208	CDI College - Surrey
209	Canadian Tourism College
210	LaSalle College
211	LaSalle College
212	LaSalle College
213	LaSalle College
214	Think Tank Training Centre
215	Vancouver Acting School
216	Okanagan College / RVDA of BC

Exhibitor List - Vancouver

Booth #	Name of Organization
217	Young Drivers of Canada
218	Burnaby Community and Continuing Education
219	John Casablancas Institute
222	Irving K Barber BC Scholarship Society
223	YMCA Camp Elphinstone
224	CG Masters Academy
226	North-west Culinary Academy of Vancouver
227	ChatterHigh
229	Canada Wide Media - Youthink Magazine / BC Living
230	Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine
231	VanArts
232	Back in Motion Rehab Inc.
233	Nimbus Institute of Recording Arts
234	John Casablancas Institute
237	Metro News
239	Vancouver Public Library
240	Vancouver Film School
241	Drake Medox College
242	Canadore Career College
243	Vancouver Academy of Dramatic Arts
244	Canadian Coast Guard College
245	Le Cordon Bleu Culinary Arts Institute
246	Centre for Arts and Technology
301	CBI Home Health
302	BC Mining HR Task Force
303	BC Mining HR Task Force
304	Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre
305	Global Financial
306	go2
307	Sunlife Financial
309	Pyramid Corporation
310	Nannies on Call
311	Match Marketing Group
312	BC Corrections
404	New Car Dealers Association of BC
405	Afro News / The Sage Foundation
406	Success
407	Wood Manufacturing Council
408	Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists
409	Insurance Institute of Canada - Career Connections
410	Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC)
504	Prairie
505	Lethbridge College
507	Vancouver Community College
508	Schoolfinder
509	Association of BC Land Surveyors
510	Columbia Bible College
512	Langara College
518	SAIT Polytechnic
519	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
521	Sprott-Shaw Degree College
522	Douglas College
523	Douglas College
524	British Columbia Institute of Technology
525	British Columbia Institute of Technology
600	University of New Brunswick
601	University of Guelph
602	Trinity Western University
604	Azusa Pacific University
606	Tyndale University College
607	Royal Roads University
609	Capilano University - Faculty of Global and Community Studies
610	Capilano University - Faculty of Education, Health and Human Development
611	Capilano University - School of Business
612	Capilano University - Professional Scuba Dive Program
613	Capilano University
614	SCAD: The University for Creative Careers
615	University Canada West
616	Grant MacEwan University
617	University of the Fraser Valley
618	British Columbia Council of Admissions & Transfer
619	BCcampus
620	Berklee College of Music
621	University of Victoria - School of Health + Information Sciences
622	University of Guelph - Humber
623	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
624	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
625	University of Victoria - Child + Youth
626	Quest University
627	Simon Fraser University - Surrey Campus
628	Thompson Rivers University - Student Recruitment
629	Thompson Rivers University - Faculty of Arts
630	Thompson Rivers University - Faculty of Science
631	Thompson Rivers University - Adventures, Culinary Arts + Tourism
632	New York Institute of Technology

Vancouver

Area 1

Time	Presentation Topic	Presented By
9:15 AM - 9:45 AM	Career and Employment Resources at the Vancouver Public Library	Vancouver Public Library
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	2012 Fashion and Beauty Trends!	John Casablancas Institute (JCI)
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM	What is a Glazier?	Glazing Contractors Association of BC
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	How To Be A Professional Actor in Vancouver	Vancouver Acting School
12:15 PM - 12:45 PM	Study in the UK - A Practical Guide to Successful University Applications	Across the Pond
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Your Path to a Career in the Culinary Industry	Northwest Culinary Academy of Vancouver
1:45 PM - 2:15 PM	Is Graphic Design the Right Education for You?	LaSalle College
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Gaining Entry to the Local Film Visual Effects Job Market	CG Masters School of Digital Visual Effects

Area 2

Time	Presentation Topic	Presented By
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Creating your own Career in the Modern Music Industry	Nimbus School of Recording Arts
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	10 Steps to a Quality Education Abroad	Laureate International Universities
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	Applying Yourself...Three Easy Steps for Admission	BCcampus
11:45 AM - 12:15 PM	How to Prepare for a Career in the 21st Century	Quest University
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM	1001 Reasons to Attend a U.S. Community College	Seattle Central Community College
1:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Business Trends & Brand Presence	FIDM / Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM	Scholarship Myths & Tips Uncovered	Scholarships Canada.com (EDge Interactive)
2:45 PM - 3:15 PM	Learn from home. Earn from home. Is it right for you?	CanScribe Career College

STUDY, WORK, TRAVEL OR VOLUNTEER ABROAD WITH THINK!NTERNATIONAL

Going abroad will change your life in many positive ways. Whether it is volunteering at an orphanage in Ethiopia or studying French language and culture in Paris - the experiences you will gain are priceless. Travelling abroad for a summer, a semester or longer will give you a fresh perspective of yourself, your home country and the world. Today's competitive job market and entrance into colleges and universities requires applicants to distinguish themselves, and international experience is an ideal way to stand out. For example, obtaining foreign language skills can make you eligible for numerous jobs that you may otherwise have been unqualified for.

The largest misconception that prevents people from going abroad is its perceived inaccessibility. People are often amazed at how easy it was to put the whole thing together. It's as easy as working through a checklist.

Are you a good candidate? Ask yourself:

- Am I willing to try new things, from foods to novel social situations?
- Am I comfortable with making my own decisions, such as what time to leave for school, which courses to take, and how to deal with conflict and change, without family and friends around to help?
- Do I like to take risks?
- How have I handled complex and new situations in the past?
- Will I be able to fulfill my academic requirements for my school at home and for any future plans? Will my school at home accept credits from the programs I am considering abroad?

AM I TOO OLD TO CONSIDER GOING ABROAD TO STUDY, WORK, OR VOLUNTEER?

Absolutely not. In fact, many individuals may not have had the opportunity to go abroad as a younger adult and are now thinking to move permanently to other countries. They are excited about trying new lifestyles, career alternatives or choosing where to retire.

THINK!NTERNATIONAL'S TOP 10 REASONS TO GO ABROAD

1. **Going abroad is the optimal way to learn a foreign language.**
2. **Going abroad provides the opportunity to explore new surroundings.**
3. **Going abroad allows you to experience another culture first-hand.**
4. **Going abroad will help you develop general life skills and give you experiences a classroom setting will never provide.**
5. **Going abroad affords you the opportunity to make friends around the world.**
6. **Going abroad helps you to learn about yourself.**
7. **Going abroad expands your worldview.**
8. **Going abroad to study, travel, work or volunteer will enhance your employment opportunities.**
9. **Going abroad to study gives you the opportunity to break out of your academic routine.**
10. **Going abroad to study and travel can enhance the value of your degree.**

Living abroad can offer you such a boost to your language skills that it might easily add a minor in a language or even a second major without having to take additional courses after returning to your home campus. At the Vancouver Education & Career Fair, you will have the opportunity to meet organizations and schools from the all over the world in the new feature area, THINK!nternational. The event is being held at the Vancouver Convention Centre - East Facility on Friday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Attend the seminars where you will get up-to-date information and discover what the best option is for your adventure abroad.

Visit educationcareerfairs.com for event details, exhibitor lists, and seminar schedules.

• Child protection • Hospital child-life • Youth justice • Child welfare
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Visit our website for detailed program information.

www.cyc.uvic.ca

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Tourism & Hospitality
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Convention Planner
Resort Coordinator
Cruise Coordinator

EDUCATION

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Education
Basic & Post Basic

TRADES

Construction Electrician
Levels 1, 2 & 3

FIND YOUR BEST FIT

Before embarking on a sucessful career, you need to know what industry and general position you are interested in. Speaking with one of our career advisors will help you outline your career goals and what fields are best suited to you. You can even tour the campus, speak with current students, and find out where our graduates are now. A new career and life path is only a meeting away.

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Black and gold trending for 2013

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Get advice from any old-school interior designer and they'll all give you the same rule: Every room needs a bit of black. The sharp contrast that black offers helps any room come to life. For a long time we've been getting that contrast with very dark brown, but look out for black. While we haven't seen it since the early '80s, it's on its way back in home decor.

Black's revival came out of the very dark brown tones commonly used as well as out of the popularity of grey over the past few years. From fashion to home decoration, grey has become a staple in our lives, outshining the taupe and beige scene. That grey is now darkening itself into its truest form — black.

Metallic colours have predominately been cool tones like silver and nickel. Now things are warming up with champagne (a half-silver, half-gold mix) for contemporary homes and old brushed brass for traditional homes. The metallics have certainly heated up and any warm, golden tone will be hot for 2013.

Used in small spaces or large spaces

You might not think such a dramatic, dark colour like black would work in a small space, but if you're consistent with your tones, then any colour can work. Black adds a sense of drama and sophistication to a room and if you usually use your space at night, why not consider black as a main element.

Try to keep a balance

When mixing the black and gold colour combination in a modern space, use 70 per cent black and 30 per cent gold.

In more traditional settings, flip the coin and use 70 per cent gold tones and 30 per cent black to sharpen things up. Funny, the 70/30 rule applies to a lot of great design rules.

Organic hammered oval Angenam bowl

Hold the predictable fruit and nuts or a single candle for a golden illumination. $20, ikea.ca.

Floor-to-ceiling style

Black floors, door frames and bookcases create a dramatic statement. ralphlaurenhome.com.

Lassalle Vanity

Grand scale goes invisible with an all black vanity or desk. $2,500, crateandbarrel.com.

Gold pig bookends

From snout to tail, your books will be sandwiched in style. $35, cb2.com.

Desire Gold wallpaper

Add some deco glamour to your walls. $80/roll, grahambrown.com.

Classic Chambord French coffee press

Serve up morning coffee in style. $70, anthropologie.com.

Exotica Cheetah 4-x-6 pelt

The classic animal print is hand made of wool. $185, ecarpetgallery.com.

Hakkari Hurricane lamps

Harness nature's warm glow. From $32, crateandbarrel.com.

Gift wrapping everywhere! Pack presents the green way

What are greener alternatives to paper when wrapping gifts?

The presents have been opened, the kids are playing happily and you start stuffing all that wrapping paper into a recycling bag. Sure, it beats

QUEEN OF GREEN
Tovah Paglaro
green@metronews.ca

a garbage bag, but you know you could do even better.

Just look at those lovely kids — taking the extra step is the greatest gift you can give them.

Fabric wrap

Wrapping gifts with festive fabric is my favourite sustainable option! Keep it simple by purchasing beautifully made bags and accessories from small retailers or get crafty and make your own.

Folding fabric as gift wrap is also pretty simple and the end results can be spectacular. Whether you're giving wine, flowers, a box or some irregular shaped delight, you'll appreciate the step-by-step folding tutorials at furoshiki.com.

Get creative

Who says that gifts need to wrapped in wrapping? A boxed item can be wrapped in a scarf. Tea towels can hide wine bottles. And socks stuffed into a paper towel roller make for a fun surprise.

Maybe the kids in your house would enjoy making their own wrapping? Large bolts of cloth can be decorated with fabric paint and reused year after year. Gifts in cardboard boxes are already wrapped — just unleash the children's creativity directly on the box.

Post-consumer wrap

If you are going to wrap a gift in paper, look for wrap that is printed on 100 per cent recycled paper, with a high post-consumer percentage. Paper should be processed chlorine-free and printed with vegetable-based ink.

Bows and buttons

It's not just the paper that causes problems.

Those bows and ribbons are a mysterious assortment of plastic, making them difficult to recycle at the end of their life. It also takes a lot of resources to produce and ship them.

Obviously, reuse the ones you have on hand. But once they've been used up, replace them with fabric ribbon and buttons. Or take your inspiration from nature and decorate with felt, pinecones, pressed flowers and other bits or beauty located in your backyard.

Try making your own gift wrap out of festive fabric. ISTOCK IMAGES

It can be fun to make your own gift tags and decorations, but if crafty isn't your thing, turn to Etsy or your local holiday market. There are lots of artisans who'll appreciate your green holiday buying power.

Have questions for the Queen of Green? Write to tpaglaro@davidsuzuki.org or tweet @DavidSuzukiQoG

Christmas dinner

Keeping dinner hot and ready

How does the Butler keep a Christmas dinner hot for the fancy people you work for? I just want to keep it warm for my family to make my life easier.
— Anxious Holiday Cook

CHARLES THE BUTLER
askcharlesthebutler@metronews.ca
For more, visit charlesmacpherson.com

Dear Anxious Holiday Cook:

That's a great question considering all the money and work that goes into preparing Christmas dinner.

So what is this great secret? Well, timing is one of the most important issues when cooking in the kitchen.

You ideally want as much of your meal to be ready at the same time, but chefs (and Butlers) still have another trick up our sleeves. It's called "a Bain Marie" — a fancy French term for water bath or double boiler.

So how does this relate to your question? Well, when chefs make certain foods like mashed potatoes and gravy — or meat — they may put the pot into a hot water bath. This keeps them perfectly hot, moist and ready to serve without cooking them further. You can cover the pot or container you are going to put in the hot water bath with saran wrap. The water bath allows you to hold the items at a hot temperature so that you can serve them all at the same time. Although you can go much longer, I don't keep food in the pots for longer than 30 to 40 minutes.

There's a lot of work and preparation that goes into Christmas dinner. ISTOCK IMAGES

Canadians deck the halls with Pinterest-inspired holiday decor

Gardening. The image-sharing social network's craft section brimming with ideas

Canadians are grabbing their scissors and glue guns this holiday season to deck the halls with homemade decorations.

And some are pointing to Pinterest as the inspiration for their decorations and attempts to save a few dollars by crafting their own do-it-yourself gifts.

A quick search on the popular image-sharing social network hails hundreds of DIY ideas. From Christmas wreaths made by gluing ornaments onto a repurposed and rounded clothes hanger, to cutting and securing cupcake liners onto the bulbs of Christmas tree lights, there's a wealth of creativity on display.

Rachel Smith's Halifax-area home is brimming with decor she's handcrafted over the years. But lately, Smith finds herself tabbing through Pinterest's DIY and crafts sections.

"They give you so many more ideas, things I never thought of," she said.

Whether it be Christmas decorations or gifts, Smith said the thrill of telling someone that you created the craft yourself is "so much more exciting."

"You feel proud of yourself ... and it's not as expensive," she said, adding that she recently painted festive light bulbs to use as ornaments.

"I think people appreciate handmade things sometimes a little bit more."

Paula Jones, a Canadian spokeswoman for the Craft and Hobby Association, said more people are flocking to craft stores in search of supplies for holiday crafts they first saw on Pinterest.

"Pinterest is really giving us a lot more easy access to different ideas," said Jones, whose association represents more than 250 Canadian businesses in the craft industry.

"From what I'm hearing from our members, certainly a lot more people are out there buying products to create Christmas decor in their homes and as gifts.

"People are looking for something more personal to give and to express themselves in their home."

Jones said for many people, a homemade Christmas craft offers a gift that keeps on giving each year.

"It's not something you'd have around your home yearround, but when you bring it out, it evokes the memories of the gift-giver, or the memories of ... where you were when you made it," Jones said from Orangeville, Ont.

"The stuff that you buy ... it doesn't have that impact."

Last year, Canadians spent more than $2.8 billion on craft supplies, according to a study by the Craft and Hobby Association.

Most crafters make their projects for holidays or special occasions, with 66 per cent of those Canadians creating crafts for the Christmas season, the study said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rachel Smith works on her Christmas crafts at home in Halifax on Dec. 3. ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Just imagine this hanging on your front door. SUBMITTED

DIY DECOR TIP: FESTIVE LAUREL LEAF WREATH

STEVEN AND CHRIS RETURN WITH NEW EPISODES JAN. 7 ON CBC. THEIR ROSTER OF EXPERTS DELIVER IDEAS AND ADVICE ON TOPICS INCLUDING HOME DECOR, FOOD AND ENTERTAINING, HEALTH AND FITNESS AND MORE.

Don't let your front entry experience the winter blues. Jazz it up with this beautiful and inexpensive DIY wreath.

Directions

1. Using wire cutters, cut the metal frame on wreath and remove the support from one end.

2. Bend metal frame to achieve a laurel-leaf shape.

3. To create the bow, fold one sheet of moss in half horizontally and glue together so you're left with a long skinny strip of double-sided moss. From there, loop each end into the middle and secure with a second, thinner piece of moss. Finally, attach tails for bow with hot glue.

4. Add extra sprigs of pine from your bundle to fill in any bare holes or blank spots. You will need to use wire to secure the pieces to the wreath.

5. Secure bow and accents to bottom of laurel leaf. Decorate with ornaments to complete the look.

Materials

- Wire cutters
- Prefabricated pine wreath
- 2 moss sheets
- Hot-glue gun
- Pine bundle
- Wire
- Decorative accents (pine cones, magnolia leaves, etc.)
- Traditional holiday ornaments

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TIEN SHER

*Subject to qualification

Baby's room DIY projects

A new baby is a bundle of joy that also costs a bundle of cash. Nursery decor is one area where new parents can save some money by creating their own design elements. Design bloggers share four easy, drool-worthy projects to give baby's room that special touch.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pretty as a picture frame mobile

Materials

- Printed papers or fabrics
- Small frames
- One larger frame
- About three yards of ribbon, divided into four uneven sections
- Decorative paper
- Photos or art
- reduced to fit small frames
- Four screw eyes
- Fishing line or thin wire
- Glue stick
- Paint
- Polyurethane

Step 1
Paint the frames to make them colourful. Some may need a light sanding first. Add a coat of polyurethane after the paint is dry.
Step 2
If any of your frames has a support arm on the back to prop it up, pull it off. You want the back of the mini frame to be completely smooth.
Step 3
Put your photos or artwork in the small frames. (You could use abstract art, photos of vintage trucks or pictures of baby's cousins, for instance.)
Step 4
To connect two small frames vertically, run the ribbon behind the artwork but inside the frame back. Cut a piece of decorative paper the same size as each frame back and, with a glue stick, paste it on.
Step 5
Remove the glass and backing from the large frame. Hang the four pairs of small frames from the large frame by twisting four screw eyes into the back of the large frame and then tying a ribbon to each screw eye.
Step 6
Tie a length of fishing line or thin wire to each screw eye, then tie all four pieces together so the mobile hangs evenly. Knot the end for attaching to a ceiling hook.

FROM CARRIE MCBRIDE, APARTMENTTHERAPY.COM

Clean and colourful dresser drawers

You can get a similar effect from contact paper, which comes in a wide variety of colours and patterns. But you can make your own if you're looking for a different look.

FROM SHERRY AND JOHN PETERSIK, YOUNGHOUSELOVE.COM

Materials

- Foam craft brushes
- Mod Podge matte finish
- Six sheets of patterned, heavy-duty wrapping paper (or swatches of colourful wallpaper or fabric)

Step 1
Wipe the insides of the drawers with a moist rag. If they're musty, wipe them with mineral spirits or Murphy's Oil Soap and let them air dry in the sun.
Step 2
After selecting six sheets of wrapping paper (or however many drawers you have), cut the sheets down to the size of the drawers. If all the drawers are the same size, use the first rectangle as a template.
Step 3
Apply a thin, even coat of Mod Podge adhesive to the bottom of the first drawer. Mod Podge is 100 per cent water-based, so it won't stink up baby's clothes.
Step 4
Glue the cut-to-size paper rectangle to the bottom of the drawer by pressing it along the centre and out towards the corners to eliminate bubbles or wrinkling. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for all drawers.
Step 5
Give the drawers four hours to dry, then apply a thin top coat of Mod Podge over the paper to protect against wear and tear. Let everything dry overnight and you're left with fresh, durably lined drawers that provide a little dose of happy every time they're opened.

Fabric mirror

Materials

- Fabric scraps
- Fabric stiffener
- aluminum foil
- Craft store
- mirror
- Cardboard
- String
- Super glue

Step 1
When you design a space for a little one, chances are you'll end up with leftover fabric. This project is a great way to use up those scraps. Lay the fabric on pieces of aluminum foil. Brush fabric stiffener onto the material and smooth out bubbles or wrinkles. Let dry completely, then peel off the foil.
Step 2
Sketch a lion or other animal onto a piece of paper and cut it out. Trace the shapes onto the back of the stiffened fabric. Cut out fabric shapes. The fabric stiffener will prevent the edges from unraveling.
Step 3
Cut a small scrap of cardboard smaller than the mirror. Punch two holes and tie a string through them. Glue the cardboard onto the back of the mirror. This will allow you to hang the fabric mirror when it's finished.
Step 4
Cut a large circle inside the lion's mane (or the face of your animal). Line up the mirror in the hole and glue it to the back of the fabric so the edges are hidden. Let everything dry completely, then hang.

FROM CARRIE MCBRIDE, APARTMENTTHERAPY.COM

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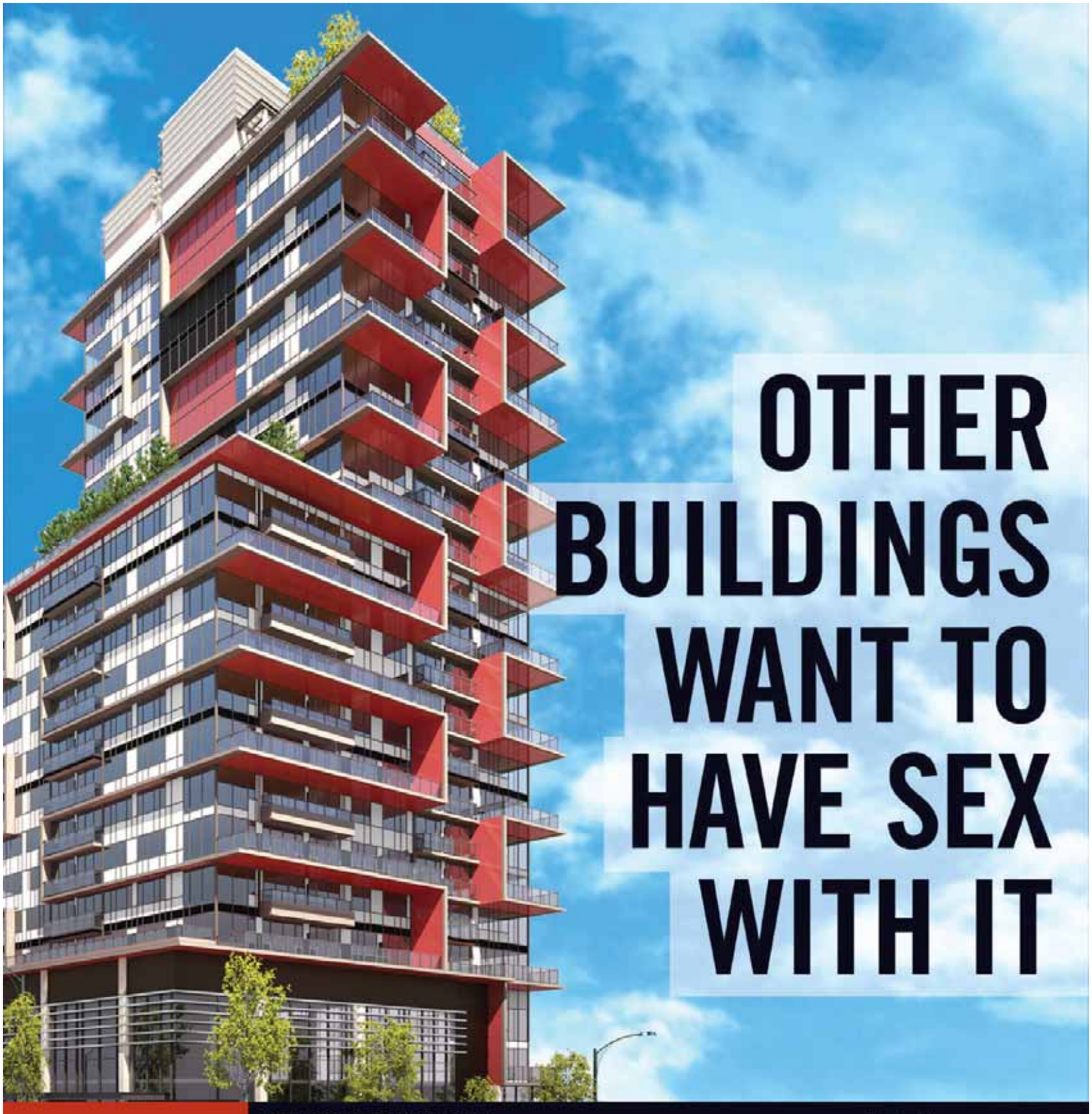

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According to research done by a professor at the University of Guelph, real estate ad phrasing has a strong effect on the sale price and a home's time on the market. Here are some phrases that can improve the chances of a home's sale, and some a seller should never use.

BUZZ WORDS FOR YOUR HOME LISTING

THE BEST

Beautiful/gorgeous
According to the study, homes that were called "beautiful" sold, on average, 15 per cent faster. While most home buyers are thrilled to get a bargain, they still put a major emphasis on the condition of a home and its aesthetic appeal.

Move-in condition
This tells a home buyer that your home needs no repairs, changes or moderations; it is perfect and ready to be lived in as soon as you hand over the keys. "I have visited many homes that use this phrase in their listing and again and again I'm impressed with the condition of the home. This is the magic phrase for me, but also not an expression that should be used lightly," says Martin Rygiel, sales director at the ComFree Network, Canada's largest commission-free real estate organization

Turnkey
"Any time I see the word 'turnkey' the pictures that go with the listing tend to reveal a home that is in fantastic condition," he says. "Another word that also catches my eye is 'immaculate'; tell me a home is immaculate and mean it, and there's a good chance I will want to check it out." Again, keep in mind that if you use this word, your home must live up to it.

Curb appeal
When a home is listed with the words "curb appeal" many home buyers perk up with anticipation. Words like "landscaping" also did well in the survey because a home that is beautiful inside and outside appeals to the masses.

Gourmet kitchen
There is no doubt that the kitchen is one of the most important, if not the most important room in a home. So it is no surprise to learn that words like "granite" and "gourmet kitchen" translated into a higher sale price. If your kitchen isn't a gourmet one, do minimal upgrades and use another proven phrase with homeowners like "newly remodeled".

Be careful what you write on your home listing — it has a strong effect on the sale. NEWSCANADA.COM

THE WORST

Motivated
While you might expect a word like "motivated" to indicate that the homeowner is willing to negotiate on price, it seems this word has the opposite effect. It makes sense for the seller to focus more on the listing and less on describing themselves personally.

Must sell
Unfortunately, the use of "must sell" implies that the home seller is desperate and that there must be something wrong with the place. This, in turn, leaves the home for sale on the market for longer than it would otherwise be. This term could convey that there is something wrong with the home or that it was overvalued to begin with.

Good value
According to Rygiel: "We've seen customers try to list their homes using the phrase 'good value' and we always advise against it. To a potential buyer, this phrase translates to 'not much to look at but a bargain for the price'."

Starter home
When a potential home buyer sees the words "starter home" on a listing, they immediately imagine a tiny home made for 1.5 people. It indicates that the property is small and economical for first time home buyers. The pitfall of saying "starter home" would be that you are only appealing to a certain portion of buyers instead of the whole market. Add the square footage of the home in the listing rather than using those words which have a negative connotation.

Freshly painted
You've invested a couple hundred dollars to paint your home and prepare it for sale and you think it looks pretty darn good. If you put the promise of a house as 'freshly painted,' potential homebuyers might wonder if that's the only thing that has recently been revamped.

NEWSCANADA.COM

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"The Spice Cookies are loosely inspired by the German Christmas favourite Pfeffernusse and are actually more closely related to an Italian spice cookie," write Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi in Jerusalem: A Cookbook.

Ottolenghi and Tamimi, who both emigrated from Jerusalem to London, England, say the cookies are popular at their four Ottolenghi restaurants over the period of Hanukkah and Christmas.

The Festival of Lights begins at sundown Saturday and ends on Dec. 16.

Spice Cookies

This recipe makes 16 cookies. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. Soak currants in brandy for 10 minutes.

2. In bowl, mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, spices, salt and dark chocolate. Mix with a whisk.

3. In stand mixer fitted with beater attachment, place butter, sugar, vanilla and lemon and orange zest and beat to combine, about 1 minute. With mixer running, slowly add egg and mix for about 1 minute. Add dry ingredients, currants and brandy. Mix until it comes together.

4. Gently knead dough in bowl with hands until it comes together. Divide dough into chunks (each about 50 ml/1/4 cup) and shape each chunk into a perfectly round ball. Place balls on baking sheets lined with parchment paper, spacing 2 cm (3/4 inch) apart, and let rest in fridge at least 1 hour.

5. Heat oven to 190 C (375 F). Bake cookies 20 minutes, until tops firm up but centres are still slightly soft. Remove from oven; let cool 5 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack. While cookies are still warm, whisk together glaze ingredients until a thin and smooth icing forms. Pour 15 ml (1 tbsp) of the glaze over each cookie, leaving it to drip and coat cookie with a very thin, almost transparent film. Finish each with 3 pieces of candied peel placed at the centre. Leave to set and serve. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ JERUSALEM BY YOTAM OTTOLENGHI AND SAM TAMIMI

Dietary restrictions

Please note, the recipes on this page may not meet specific dietary restrictions.

Ingredients

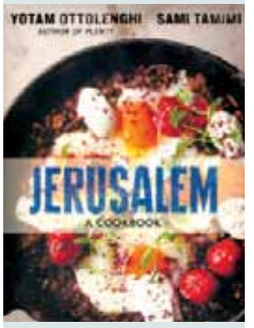
- 175 ml plus 30 ml (3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp) currants
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) brandy
- Scant 500 ml (2 cups) all-purpose flour
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) best-quality cocoa powder
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) baking powder
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) baking soda
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each ground cinnamon, allspice, ginger and nutmeg
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) salt
- 150 g (5 oz) good-quality dark chocolate, coarsely grated
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 150 ml (2/3 cup) superfine sugar
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla extract
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each grated lemon zest and grated orange zest
- 1/2 large free-range egg
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) diced candied citrus peel

Glaze

- 45 ml (3 tbsp) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 325 ml (1 1/3 cups) icing sugar

Cookbook of the Week

Unique food and city



For the book Jerusalem: A Cookbook, Yotam Ottolenghi teams up with his friend and co-owner of his restaurants, Sami Tamimi. Both men were born in Jerusalem in the same year: Tamimi on the Arab east side and Ottolenghi in the Jewish west.

In this book, they explore the cuisine of their home city and present a collection of recipes that reflects a melting pot of Muslim, Jewish, Arab, Christian and Armenian communities.

Among the recipes are: Seafood and Fennel Soup, Kofta B'Siniyah, Sweet Filo Cigars and more. METRO

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HOLIDAY 2012 m gift guide

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Look your best during — and after — the holidays — PAGES 50, 52

Take the stress out of shopping with tips from Yummy Mummy Club — PAGE 54

A chocolate spice loaf recipe that will satisfy your sweet tooth — PAGE 56

Click on these ideas for the videophile on your gift list — PAGE 59

19 shopping days left

For the Beauty...

JANINE FALCON
For Metro

From beauty empowerment to fragranced skin, from shimmering nails to luscious hair, these gift ideas have her (and you) covered.

More than a makeup book, **Bobbi Brown Pretty Powerful** (Chronicle Books, 2012) is a confidence-builder from a pro who empowers with must-try tips and tricks. $34.95 hardcover, chapters.indigo.ca.

Give her nail polish collection a brand new sheen with **YSL La Laque Couture Top Coat in Première Neige**, an iridescent top coat that sparkles over any colour. $27, Holt Renfrew.

Any scent from the Byredo Parfums collection is a unique and special gift for fragrance lovers; **Byredo Black Saffron**, an Oriental Spicy eau de parfum is the newest. $235, Holt Renfrew.

Luscious **LoveFresh Lemon Verbena Body Butter** pampers skin with aloe, chamomile and calendula extracts, and is made sans parabens or petrolatum. $24, lovefresh.com.

Glamorous yet understated like its creator Aerin Lauder, the **Aerin Holiday Style Palette** offers foolproof shadows and subtle highlight powder. $78, esteelauder.ca.

Feminine and fragrant, **Valentino Valentina Body Scrub** is a creamy exfoliant in a lovely frosted jar she'll keep for years. $78, thebay.com.

The award-winning complexion-saver of the season, this natural moisture booster relieves exczema. **Consonant HydrExtreme Serum**, $72, consonantbody.com.

She'll swoon over **MAC's Sinfully Chic Face Kit**, a charming neutral makeup + brush set. Trust. $85, maccosmetics.com.

Soft, shiny, swingy hair is hers with silicone-free **Shu Uemura Cleansing Oil Shampoo**, which gently purifies all hair types, including fine, limp, and oily. $55.

Above: Valentino Valentina Body Scrub.
Above left: LoveFresh Lemon Verbena Body Butter.
Left: Aerin Holiday Style Palette.

From bottom left to bottom right: MAC's Sinfully Chic Face Kit, Consonant HydrExtreme Serum, Byredo Black Saffron, YSL La Laque Couture Top Coat in Première Neige, Shu Uemura Cleansing Oil Shampoo.

Grooming gifts for him

JANINE FALCON
For Metro

From wake-up to spruce-up, these manly gift ideas will help him put his best self forward before his first coffee of the day.

Perk up his morning routine with the ultra-fresh **L'Occitane Verdon Adventure** set, which includes shower gel, soap, deodorant and eau de toilette. $82, loccitane.ca.

He'll appreciate the weightless **Biotherm Homme Force Supreme** anti-aging formulas that promise smoother, firmer, more comfortable skin. Lotion, $45 and Serum, $70; biotherm.ca.

If he's into natural stuff, he'll dig non-oily **Weleda After Shave Balm**, which cools and soothes with organic jojoba seed oil, aloe and myrrh. $26.99, well.ca.

Set him up for next November with the waterproof **Philips Styleshaver**, which trims, styles and shaves with easy precision. $99.99, personaledge.com.

He doesn't have to be a sexy vampire (or an actor who plays one) to wear **Calvin Klein Encounter**, a warm, woody scent. $67, thebay.com.

Ideal for the man who likes simple yet sophisticated skincare, **Shiseido's Men's Essentials Gift Set** includes a handsome toiletry case. $70, thebay.com

Help him love his hair more with **Kerastase Anti-Oiliness Daily Treatment Shampoo** and **Leave-In Treatment**. $36 each, kerastase.com.

For the multi-tasking man, the **Jack Black Core Collection** includes cleanser+toner, shave-oil cream+skin conditioner, and moisturizer+SPF. $52, ebeauty.ca.

Stock his gym bag with zesty essentials, such as **Crabtree & Evelyn's West Indian Lime Travel Set**. $26, Crabtree & Evelyn boutiques.

Calvin Klein Encounter, above.

Above: Jack Black Core Collection.
Right: Kerastase Anti-Oiliness Daily Treatment Shampoo.
Below: Shiseido's Men's Essentials Gift Set.

From bottom left to bottom right: L'Occitane Verdon Adventure set, Biotherm Homme Force Supreme, Philips Styleshaver, Weleda After Shave Balm, Crabtree & Evelyn's West Indian Lime Travel Set.

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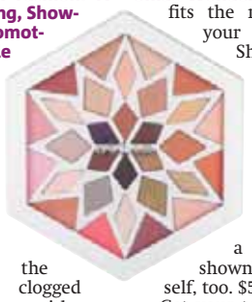
Teen dream beauty and body care

JANINE FALCON
For Metro

From savvy style advice to smart skincare to totally adorbs makeup, great gift ideas for the teens in your life.

An energizing citrus kick in the morning shower via a **LUSH Cool Christmas** duo is just the thing for sleepyhead teens. $16.95, lush.ca

Whether your teen is obsessed with fashion or just developing his or her own style, **Learn to Speak Fashion: A Guide to Creating, Showcasing and Promoting Your Style** (Owl Kids, 2012) offers smart insider insight, advice and encouragement you'll love too. $16.95 paperback, chapters.indigo.ca.



Put the kybosh on clogged teenage pores with a **Clarisonic Mia** for deep-cleaning sessions every other day. $139, sephora.ca.

No girl can resist mini beauty treats; the **Soap & Glory Small Wonders Gift Set** totes fits the mini bill (and your wallet). $20, Shoppers Drug Mart.

If you love makeup, you'll want to snag a **Stila Snow Angel Color Palette** — 18 shadows, 12 blushes and a mascara (not shown) — for yourself, too. $51, sephora.ca.

Get your teen on a good-skin regimen with a **Dermalogica Clean Start Starter Kit**, which handles pesky zits, too. $45.50, cleanstart.dermalogica.com.ca

From the fashion queen of whimsey, this **Anna Sui Holiday Collection** includes blush, shadow, lip gloss and a sweet lacy pouch. $50, Sears.ca and Murale.ca.

The Body Shop For Men Maca Root Scrub & Shave Set sets your young fellow up with face wash, moisturizer — and eye cream Dad can swipe. $35, thebodyshop.ca.

Nourishing essentials for feet and hands, such as the **Burt's Bees Best of Burt's Bees Set**, are easy stocking stuffers. $24.99, burtsbees.ca.

Middle and left: Stila makeup palettes.

From bottom left to bottom right: Burt's Bees Best of Burt's Bees Set, The Body Shop For Men Maca Root Scrub & Shave Set, Clarisonic Mia, LUSH Cool Christmas, Dermalogica Clean Start Starter Kit.

Above: Anna Sui Holiday Collection.

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CINEPLEX STORE

Low-stress shopping for a truly happy holiday

EDEN SPODEK
YummyMummyClub.ca

December is supposed to be the time of holiday cheer.

Yet, so often we get stressed out when it comes to holiday shopping. Stores are crowded, kids are nagging for that "must-have" new toy or electronic gadget, not to mention teachers' gifts, and something for the BFF who has everything but insists on upholding the gift exchange you have been doing since you shared a university dorm. Then there's finding that special something for the love of your life.

Here are some tips to help make life easier, not just this month, but all year round.

Make a list in advance

When you make a list in advance and stick to it, you will reduce the risk of impulse buying and cut down on browsing time.

Shop online

Browse, research, comparison shop, and find unique gifts all from the comfort of your own keyboard. It's easy to look for the best deals. With the strong Canadian dollar, consider cross-border shopping. Look for retailers who offer deals on shipping and free gift wrapping too. No need to drag the kids along or go out in public to an overcrowded mall.

Buy teachers' gifts as a class

Get together with other parents and pool your money together so you can buy a group gift. Gift certificates from a local bookstore or mall allow your child's teacher to choose something they will enjoy instead of toss out.

Looking for deals online can help alleviate some of the holiday shopping stress. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Watch for online giveaways

There are lots of great giveaways on blogs, Twitter and community sites, including YummyMummyClub. The chances of winning are surprisingly pretty good — why not at least try?

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These days, pretty much every charity accepts donations online — it's quick and easy, and with a minimum donation you will get a tax receipt, too. It may not be as much fun as unwrapping presents but it feels wonderful to do something for others less fortunate while cutting down unnecessary gifts that would otherwise clutter your home.

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WEST VANCOUVER
Park Royal Shopping Centre

Recipe. All-In-One Spiced Chocolate Loaf

This Green & Black's Organic All-in-one Spiced Chocolate Loaf recipe will be a sure hit during the holidays.

Ingredients:

- 50 g dark (70 per cent cocoa solids) chocolate
- 100 g plain flour
- 125 g icing sugar
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 175 g unsalted butter at room temperature, plus extra for greasing
- 4 medium free-range eggs
- 100 g dark chocolate with ginger

Instructions:

1 Preheat the oven to 180 C/350 F/gas mark 4, and butter a 22-centimetre loaf pan.

2 Melt the dark chocolate using double boiler method (placing a microwave or heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water) ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water. Set aside to cool.

3 Blend the flour, sugar, spices and baking powder. This can be achieved using a food processor or a hand-held electric mixer.

4 Add the butter, cooled melted chocolate and the eggs and blend until evenly combined. Pour the mixture into the loaf pan and bake for about 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Carefully remove the loaf from the pan and cool on a wire rack.

5 Meanwhile, melt the ginger chocolate bar using the double boiler method and drizzle over the cooled cake. Makes one loaf.

Tip: You can also drizzle the loaf with other Green & Black's Organic chocolate. Dark, milk or white chocolate would also complement this cake's flavours.

Dark, milk or white chocolate would also complement this cake's flavours. CONTRIBUTED

RECIPE COMPLIMENTS OF GREEN & BLACK'S ORGANIC HOLIDAY 2012

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Offering hope is a family affair

Grandma, mom and kids give Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope

For eight years now, Anna Maria Reiff has been doing all her holiday shopping from the comfort of her couch at home. No, Reiff is not an eBay addict; she's a long-time donor to Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope.

Every year, in what has become a holiday tradition in her family, Reiff flips through the Gifts of Hope catalogue to pick livestock, clean drinking water and literacy training for families in developing nations. Her choices are bought in the name of a friend or family member who then receives them as holiday gifts. "You can really tailor your gift to your passion or that of a loved one," she notes.

That was never truer than in 2011, after Reiff's father, Donato Della Penna, passed away. "My father didn't have the opportunity to go to high school, but he was an avid academic. He loved learning and became a maintenance worker to put all of us through school," she explains. Reiff found the perfect way to honour her dad. "On Plan's Gifts of Hope website [plangifts.com], I saw that a school was being created in Ghana. I made a larger-than-usual donation in his memory."

Greg Pacek

Anna Maria Reiff, right, her son Peter Reiff, left, and mom Emma Della Penna make the season bright by giving each other Gifts of Hope.

She even had the opportunity to visit Ghana for the school's grand opening and saw first-hand how Gifts of Hope can change a community forever. "I spoke to the headmistress and she explained how thankful she is for the chance to empower the women especially. I saw women taking the lead in the village and was so impressed."

Women and girls are often the key beneficiaries of Gifts of Hope. "It's critical to invest in girls," says Sangita Patel, Plan Canada's director of program management. "They are the last to be fed and the last to go to school."

This year, to celebrate the power and potential of girls worldwide, and in recognition of the unique challenges that face them, Plan Canada led the charge to get the United Nations to declare October 11, 2012, the first-ever International Day of the Girl.

Out of the 40-plus Gifts of Hope available, 15 are gifts that support Plan's Because I am a Girl initiative. These include Literacy training for two women ($120), a Fuel-efficient stove ($60) and Girls' hygiene essentials ($25).

Another top necessity in developing countries is the need for medical care for pregnant women and their newborns. It's an issue close to the hearts of Plan Canada sponsors Ali and Ariana Nabavieh, who bought a Gift of Hope to help build a maternal health clinic in Tanzania.

The Nabaviehs' own child, Mylo, now nearly two years old, was born with a heart condition and had two surgeries to correct it before he turned one. "Because he was born here, the healthcare system saved his life," notes Ali. "So, when we celebrated his first birthday, we knew exactly what our next Gift of Hope would be."

As kids, both he and Ariana were taught to consider those less fortunate. "And if we can inspire even one person to give a Gift of Hope," Ali says, "we'll be happy."

TIP: Thanks to Plan Canada's partners, your donations will go even further. Look for "Matched" gifts at plangifts.com.

Gifts for all

Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope can suit any budget. With 40-plus options, thinking outside the gift box is not only easy and convenient, it will also mean the world to your loved ones and to families in developing nations.

This year, purchase any Gift of Hope and you'll be eligible for a chance to win a trip to Tanzania in the fall of 2013 to see first-hand the changes that your gifts are making in that country.

With any gift you choose, you will also receive a free gift card to notify your recipient of the gift. You can select from the options below or visit **plangifts.com** to see all Gifts of Hope.

- Goat: **$75**
- Newborn checkup: **$12**
- Mango tree: **$15**
- Classroom essentials for a child: **$17**
- Maternity beds and supplies: **$70**
- Clean water for a family: **$75**
- School vegetable garden: **$175**
- Water and sanitation for a community: **$1,000**
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Tips to survive mall shopping

Stay sane. Timing, patience and online research will help

Try going to the mall before work for more convenient parking, less people and first crack at the newly restocked shelves. ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

The holidays are a whole lot of fun — there are parties, snacks and plenty of chances to unwind.

There's absolutely no downside except, of course, going to the mall.

At this time of year, the mall is hot, crowded, and unpleasant, but shopping experts at RedFlagDeals.com have put together a list of tips that will help you handle it like a pro.

Go against the flow

Try hitting the mall before work for more convenient parking, less people — and the first crack at newly restocked shelves.

Good things come to those who wait

For friends or relatives that you won't see until after the holidays, consider holding off on shopping for their gifts. Yes, if you head out on Boxing Day the mall will be just as hot, crowded, and unpleasant, but the deals might be better.

Shop online

It's convenient and comfortable to shop online, so do as much of that as you can. And even if you are shopping in-store, make sure you research prices and items online first. Bargain hunting websites are a good place to start.

Layer up

If you are headed to the mall, dress lightly, in easy-to-remove layers. And bring something to stuff that heavy winter coat in.

NEWS CANADA

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Sharp 90-inch LED TV — $9,999.99, below, Apple TV — $109, right.

Television Wonderland

Options for your viewing pleasure

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

Wouldn't it be nice to wake up to a brand new television Christmas morning? Whether you are looking for a new TV or simply want to add to your home theatre, there are plenty of options for you or the videophile on your shopping list.

Panasonic Viera TCL42U5 — $499

Not everyone needs all the bells and whistles of some of the more expensive televisions on the market. Sometimes you just want to watch TV. This 42-inch 1080p LCD TV gives a great picture for a fraction of the price of most other sets. You still get a variety of inputs (including three HDMI) plus you will benefit from Eco mode, which will save you money on your energy bills.

LG Cinema 3D LM9600 — $2,299

If your heart is set on a 3-D TV, look no further than this LED TV from LG. It has the ability to convert any 2-D content into breathtaking 3-D on the fly. Everything can be controlled through simple gestures using the Magic Remote, or simply tell your TV what you want it to do through voice control. You will find tons of inputs on the back, plus it's Wi-Fi enabled.

Sharp 90-inch LED TV — $9,999.99

Good luck bringing this one down the chimney Santa! Sharp's 90-inch LED TV is the largest in Canada. Experience movies the way they were meant to be seen — on the big screen. The larger screen allows for bigger speakers, giving you a theatre-like experience right in your home. Gamers will enjoy the Vyper Drive feature that reduces lag times while playing games. You can also connect wirelessly to the web or enjoy apps such as Netflix. This beautiful television comes with a hefty price tag, so don't even think about asking for it if there is even the slightest chance you are on the naughty list.

Samsung Blu-ray Player BD-E6500 — $219

Not only can this Blu-ray device play your favourite high-definition movies in 2-D and 3-D, it can turn any TV into a smart TV with built-in apps such as Netflix, YouTube and Facebook. If you already own a Samsung smartphone you can use it to control the action. The built-in USB port also allows playback of videos, photos and music from your USB devices.

Apple TV — $109

Access all of your iTunes content directly on your television. This tiny media player ensures all of your movies, TV shows, and music are readily available, plus get access to Netflix, YouTube and Vimeo without logging onto your computer. One of my favourite features has to be AirPlay, which allows you to stream content from your iPad, MacBook, or iMac right to your television with a simple click. Great for presentations or simply playing games and apps on the big screen.

Logitech Harmony 650 Remote — $79.99

At one time you had to pay a fortune to get an amazing universal remote. The Harmony 650 proves that's no longer the case. Complete with colour display, this advanced remote can control up to five devices at a fraction of the price of other high-end remotes. While it does require an Internet connected PC or Mac to set up, once it's up and running it simplifies even the most complex home theatre setup so everyone in the family can use it.

Samsung Blu-ray Player BD-E6500 — $219, left, Panasonic Viera TCL42U5 — $499, top left, Logitech Harmony 650 Remote — $79.99, top right.

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CFL

13 Lions eligible for free agency

The Canadian Football League, as well as the B.C. Lions, unveiled its list of possible free agents Wednesday.

The Lions' list included 13 players, although five of them retired during the last off-season.

However, the list of active players who appear headed toward free agency is notable. It includes

Jovan Olafioye
THE CANADIAN PRESS

linebacker Solomon Elimimian and offensive lineman Jovan Olafioye, with both expected to test the National Football League market.

Elimimian's agent, Bardia Ghahremani, has made it clear that his client is seeking a release from the Lions so he can work out for NFL clubs prior to Feb. 15, when CFL free agency begins.

Perhaps the player the Lions would most like to put pen to paper on a contract is non-import wide receiver Shawn Gore.

The 25-year-old from Toronto saw a drop-off in receiving yards this year compared to 2011; however, he had five touchdowns for the Lions in 2012, compared to the regular season before that.

Backup quarterback Mike Reilly is also headed for free agency.

Reilly has been with the Lions for the past three seasons, and backup to Travis Lulay for the past two. He made two starts late in the 2012 campaign when Lulay was restricted to the sidelines with a sore right shoulder.

Reilly could look to land a starter's job elsewhere in the CFL.

Also on the Lions' list of potential free agents are offensive linemen Jon Hameister-Ries and Jesse Newman, with both guys experiencing injury-plagued seasons, non-import defensive back Cauchy Muamba and linebacker James Yurichuk.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Vancouver Canucks defenceman Kevin Bieksa expressed cautious optimism towards the latest rounds of NHL CBA negotiations, as he met with reporters following a skate at UBC Wednesday. CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Not jumping 'too far ahead'

NHL lockout. Vancouver Canucks players cautiously optimistic as CBA negotiations take positive twist this week

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Kevin Bieksa has a better tennis serve than both Henrik and Daniel Sedin. That much the Vancouver Canucks defenceman is sure of.

When it comes to the seemingly encouraging developments in the NHL lockout and negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement over the last 48 hours, well, that's another story.

"I don't think we can jump too far ahead," said Bieksa, with his skates, NHLPA jersey and tennis racket in hand following a skate at UBC Wednesday morning.

"We've had a lot of ups and downs throughout the course of the lockout. It's encouraging, but you know I'm not going to go home and tape my stick."

At the recommendation of NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, owners and players — Canucks forward Manny Malhotra was one of the 18 players from the NHLPA side — met in New York for a marathon discussion that went well into the night Tuesday, without Bettman or NHLPA executive director Don Fehr in the room.

The two sides met again Wednesday after the NHL board of governors meeting.

The vibe coming out of New York had been mostly positive as the lockout hit Day 80, although it was tempered slightly as negotiations to reach a new CBA and save the NHL season continue.

Quoted

"Sometimes the message is received a lot better coming from somebody else and it seems like that was the case (Tuesday)."

Canucks defenceman Kevin Bieksa

"From what I heard (Tuesday), I think there was a lot of positive signs," said Daniel Sedin.

"But until a deal is reached, you don't want to get too high. Just listen to what they have to say and hopefully we can get something the next few days. But what I heard (Tuesday), it was a good sign."

Citing "sources," Chris Johnston of The Canadian Press reported that the owners discussed the possibility of a 50-game schedule during their meeting.

"I think anytime you get a season in, doesn't matter if it's 40 games or 60, or 80, once the season starts you're going to still fight for those playoff spots," said Daniel Sedin.

"It's going to be a fun year but until then it's wait and see."

Abbotsford Heat forward Ben Street carries the puck up ice against the San Antonio Rampage on Wednesday. CAM TUCKER/METRO

Heat shoot blanks against Rampage

For the second straight night, the Abbotsford Heat dominated in the shots-on-goal department.

But, as Heat head coach Troy Ward deduced after an overtime loss to the San Antonio Rampage Tuesday, when his team had double the amount of pucks on net than its visitors from Texas, "shots are the shots."

In terms of goals, which matter most, the Heat found themselves on the losing side both nights of this two-game mini-series.

On Wednesday, the Heat outshot the Rampage 36-14, but lost 4-0 before a crowd of 1,877 fans at the Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre.

The loss concludes a quick four-game homestand for the Heat. They finished it with three of a possible eight points.

Leland Irving, making his first start in net for Abbotsford since Nov. 18, was shelled for three goals on eight shots before getting the hook in favour of Danny Taylor early in the second period.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

Exclusively online

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Opposites attract for welterweight bout

UFC. Rising star MacDonald see his next victim in former champion Penn

B.J. Penn watches the big screen after his drawn fight against Jon Fitch at UFC 127 on Feb. 27, 2011 in Sydney, Australia. Penn will square off against Rory MacDonald on Saturday in Seattle. MARK KOLBE/GETTY IMAGES FILE

A grim-faced Rory "Ares" MacDonald delivered a blunt message Wednesday.

B.J. Penn is fighting for the wrong reasons and will pay for it Saturday when the two welterweights meet on a televised UFC card at KeyArena.

Penn — a former lightweight and welterweight champion — is fighting for status or legacy, the Kelowna product argued.

"I'm fighting to hurt him," MacDonald said. "Not fighting for someone's opinion."

The two men were a study in attitudes at a public workout in a downtown hotel ballroom.

A relaxed Penn posed for photos with fans and signed autographs before coming over to renew acquaintances with reporters.

"B.J. Penn still holds court," said the smiling Hawaiian, who has fought 21 times in the UFC.

"Look at this," he added as he pointed to the wall of media around him. "I've got everybody around me. I'm the centre of attention. And I'm having fun. I'm living the dream, I'm living it up."

Penn (16-8-2) offered reporters fist bumps and hugs.

MacDonald, meanwhile, looked at the media like they were bugs, hardly moving a facial muscle as he endured an eight-and-a-half-minute scrum.

"I'm just focused, that's all," he said.

"It's good," said coach Firas Zahabi. "A young man that age usually would have his head spinning with all the attention he's getting. He knows there is one thing to do and there's one thing on his mind. That gives me a lot of confidence."

The bookmakers agree, making the 23-year-old MacDonald almost a 3-1 favourite.

Penn is known as The Prodigy, for earning his black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu in just three years and becoming the first non-Brazilian to win the black-belt division of the World Jiu-Jitsu Championship.

But MacDonald (13-1) is also a prodigy of sorts. He took his first MMA class at 14, learning all aspects of the sport from the get-go rather than coming over from wrestling or another speciality.

MacDonald had his first pro fight at 16 — his parents had to sign a waiver to make it happen — and was the youngest fighter on the UFC books when he signed a contract at 20.

Now 4-1 in the UFC, he is the seventh-youngest fighter in the organization and Zahabi calls him "probably the hardest-hitting athlete pound-for-pound I've ever trained."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Super-fight talk

Georges St-Pierre wants to meet Anderson Silva in a super-fight, according to his coach.

- "He told me yes," said Firas Zahabi. "But I think there's a lot to be negotiated. I don't know much more than that."
- St-Pierre is back training after a holiday following his successful welterweight title defence last month against Carlos Condit at UFC 154 in Montreal.

NBA. Early-season woes a thing of the past for league-leading Grizzlies

Sitting atop the NBA standings is new territory for Memphis. Getting off to a winning start is just as unusual for the Grizzlies.

Memphis, which tends to stumble out the gate, is a league-best 13-3. The Grizzlies never have had a better record at this point of the season. They were 11-5 in 2005-06 and 10-6 last season, the only other times they have had a winning record after 16 games.

Coach Lionel Hollins and his Grizzlies list several reasons for this great start, ranging from scheduling to preseason preparation to better chemistry. Point guard Mike Conley said it started with the way the Grizzlies approached the beginning of training camp.

"Guys were already in shape, using training camp to get ready for the first preseason game," Conley said. "We were just taking it step-by-step. But the first game, I thought guys' minds were in mid-season form, and we were clicking in so many different areas as opposed to the past seasons where we started out sluggish and slow."

So far, so good.

The Grizzlies are the NBA's best after a 108-98 overtime win over Phoenix on Tuesday night.

That's a stark contrast to some of their other starts. Some of the worst included a 1-11 start in 2001 and losing the first 13 to open the 2002-03 season.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"At every single position, they're a challenge."

Lawrence Frank, coach of the Detroit Pistons, on the Grizzlies' hot start.

NFL

Private service memorializes Chiefs' Belcher

Several players for the Kansas City Chiefs attended a memorial service for teammate Jovan Belcher, who killed his girlfriend and then fatally shot himself in the head.

Retired Chiefs Hall of Famer Bobby Bell said after the private hour-long service that general manager Scott Pioli, who witnessed Belcher's suicide on Saturday, spoke during the service. Bell said an uncle of Belcher's also spoke. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chiefs quarterbacks Brady Quinn, left, and Matt Cassel leave a memorial service for teammate Jovan Belcher on Wednesday in Kansas City, Mo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
If you start something new today, there is every chance it will succeed — so get busy! Mars in the career area of your chart gives you the drive and the ambition you will need to undertake a major new project.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Play to your strengths today and you won't go far wrong. Decide what it is that means the most to you and focus on it to the exclusion of everything else. If others say you are being selfish, take it as a compliment!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You now have the drive and the determination to accomplish something out of the ordinary. The fact that others say it cannot be done — or should not be done — will encourage you to prove them wrong. You love a challenge.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
A breakthrough of some kind is possible but you have to be proactive. If you just sit there waiting for events to come round your way, you may be waiting a very long time. What can you do to speed things along?

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Good luck will come to you over the next 24 hours but not in the form of material things. Most likely, it will be in the shape of a friend whose wise words are worth more than all the gold you could carry.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You are under fortunate stars at the moment and if you don't quite believe that now, you will start to believe it over the next few days. The more you think and act lucky, the more luck you will attract.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It is probably going too far to claim that you can transform your life over the next 24 hours but you can certainly change it in important ways. You are already moving in the right direction. All you have to do is take longer strides.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
If you feel compelled to move in a new direction, you must not fight against it. It may seem strange to you now but over the next few days you will see that it is entirely to your benefit. Trust your instincts.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Why are you so defensive? Why do you insist on believing that the world is against you and you need to protect yourself? It's time to snap out of it. Reality is what you want it to be, so lighten up and live.

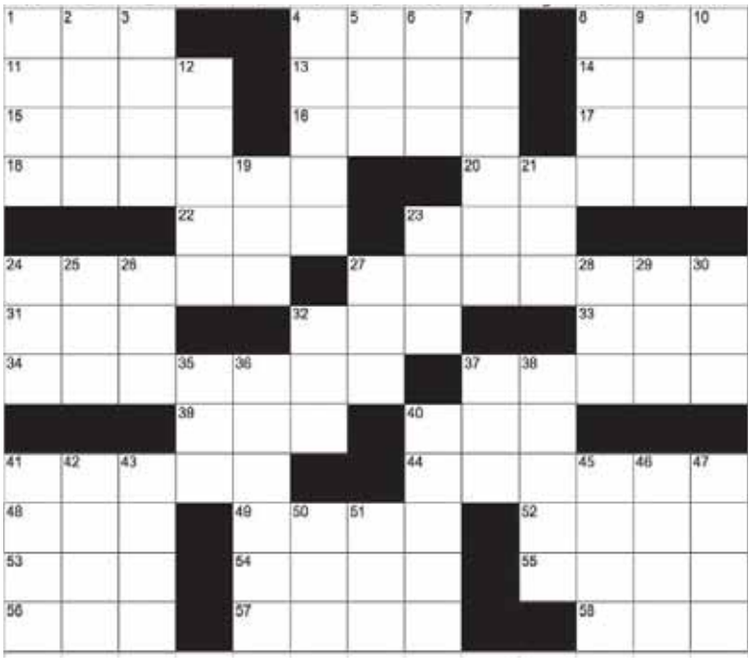
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Put yourself in the spotlight today so that employers and others in authority can see who you are and what you can do. Yes, some people may think you are being too pushy but better that than you not pushing at all.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you want to make changes then now is the time. Don't take it as a bad sign if certain people try to talk you out of it or place obstacles in your path. They're just afraid you'll succeed. And you will.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Some people never stop moaning about how tough life is, but it isn't true. Each day can be a new beginning and each day can be full of every joy imaginable. Make love and laughter your watchwords today. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword

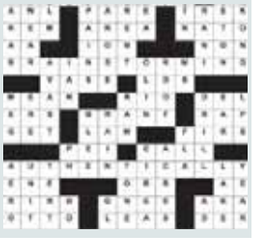
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Actor James Van — Beek
4. Cigarette substances
8. Globe
11. Brainstorm
13. Beatles Meter Maid
14. By way of
15. Glitch or hitch
16. Paradise
17. Height abbr.
18. Vacation necessity
20. Wooded valleys
22. Volleyball need
23. "I am — "
24. Scolds
27. Peter Falk drama
31. Bullring cheer
32. Food morsel for Mister Ed
33. Dinghy mover
34. Chic
37. Over yonder
39. Want ad abbr.
40. Ocean
41. Trample
44. Grease pencil, for one
48. Hit lightly
49. Dueling sword
52. Yearn
53. Letter after ka in Spanish
54. Math calculation
55. Halt
56. Ink holder
57. Ogle
58. Winding curve

Down
1. Computer data holder
2. Charlotte Rae on The Facts of Life
3. Paper quantity
4. Halloween candy
5. Pitch in
6. Map abbr.
7. Summer shoe
8. Racetrack shape
9. Brook
10. Belfry dwellers
12. Broker
19. Matter for the courts
21. Aussie bird
23. Tippler
24. Eggs
25. — in the Family
26. Indicates maiden name
27. Family pet
28. One of The Three Stooges
29. Cheers was one
30. Source for raw metal
32. Toronto province
35. Herd
36. Implore
37. Some like it hot
38. Heavenly strings
40. Daub
41. Ladder rung
42. Yarn
43. — Mike with Mike Bullard
45. Stringed toy
46. The Dukes of Hazzard spin-off
47. Bodybuilder's count
50. Prior to
51. Wide shoe spec

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

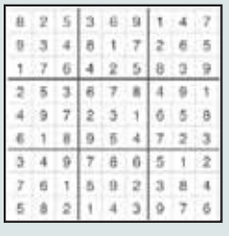
See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

6		9		1	5			3
	8		9					7
	2		7				1	
9							5	
		6	8		9	7		
	1							4
	5				7		9	
3					4		8	
8				1	2		3	

Yesterday's Sudoku



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Color: White

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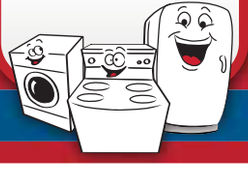

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